

**THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS OF NIGERIA**

**by**

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**TO ALL NIGERIAN DIPLOMATS, PAST AND PRESENT,  
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE MAKING OF NIGERIAN  
FOREIGN POLICY**

I, Obioma Philip Oparah hereby declare that  
this thesis has been researched and composed  
by myself.

.....

Edinburgh, January 1986

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### ABSTRACT

This study of the foreign policy process of Nigeria explains how the country's foreign policy is made and the environmental setting in which it is made. It argues that in spite of domestic political crises and major changes in government, the process of making foreign policy has settled into discernible patterns and exemplifies a stable body of principles. Nigeria has an active environment (domestic and external) for policy making, as illustrated by the array of sources and types of input into policy making on virtually every external issue. The actual making of foreign policy is done by the executive:- the Presidency - Federal Executive Council - Ministry of External Affairs - etc., and it passes through the process from initiation to consideration, decision, implementation and evaluation, involving a series of consultations with both governmental and non-governmental agencies. Case studies are used to illustrate the argument that foreign policy making in Nigeria is a collective responsibility in the sense of the participation of many organs of government in the process and the outcome depends on the policy makers' perception of both the given issue and the prevailing circumstances in the domestic and external environments of Nigeria.

Contrary to the impression about political processes in developing countries, it argues that Nigeria's foreign policy process is not very different from that of developed countries. If there is a significant difference, it lies in the amount of information and resources put into policy making, which reflect in the content of policy while the process is basically the same. Unlike the

capitalist and communist states, Nigeria's foreign policy is not necessarily based on pure calculation of advantages or how to exploit the weakness of friendly countries. It is rather a long term policy of mutual co-operation and assistance. Its practice, contrary to the views of its critics, has been of a high profile and purposeful.

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Obioma Phil Oparah

**PART I       THE BACKGROUND OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### (1) PURPOSE

Relatively little has been written about the foreign policy of Nigeria and almost nothing on the processes of external policy making and the principles that guide foreign policy structures in the formulation and execution of policies. Some of the writers on the subject have concentrated on some sub-areas or issues of the country's external relations. Even at that, most of such writings are concerned more with the attitudes of Nigeria's political leaders towards the country's external relations than the complexity of the national and international environment in which policy is made.

This is not to denigrate in-depth studies and researches by serious students of foreign policy in various world institutions of higher learning, some of which will be cited in this work. For example, Akinyemi in his obviously captivating book,<sup>1</sup> analysed the impact of the Nigerian political system on selected foreign policy issues and argued that the ruling elite in the First Republic had a realistic perception of Nigerian foreign policy and "the interests they intended them to protect". Similarly, Gordon Idang<sup>2</sup> examined the domestic sources of Nigerian foreign policy and argued contrary to Akinyemi that the Balewa government had no clear perception of the objectives and goals of foreign policy and that religious and moral sentimentalism led that government not only to ignore the vital interests of Nigeria and

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1. Akinyemi, A.B, Foreign Policy and Federalism: The Nigerian Experience. Ibadan University Press, 1974.

2. Idang, Gordon, Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy (1960-1966). Ibadan University Press, 1973.

Africa but also to present Nigeria "both as a 'status quo' state and a stooge of the West".<sup>3</sup>

A further study of these texts may be salutary. However, the point here is that there is a conspicuous gap in both research and available literature on Nigerian foreign policy. Kirk-Greene noted that "The profound lacuna that characterises the literature on the foreign relations of African states and on international affairs as they involve African countries - a gap widened by a comparison with the rich corpus of literature on African civil services - is an indication of how much work still needs and deserves to be done on Africa's foreign service cadres".<sup>4</sup> He pointed out specifically that "the structure and behaviour of foreign services" are the "heavily under-studied aspects of the foreign relations of African states".<sup>5</sup> Also Professor Olajide Aluko has confirmed the paucity of literature on Nigerian foreign policy and attributes part of the difficulty in filling the gap to the inability of Nigerian Ambassadors and Diplomats to publish their account of the Foreign Service.<sup>6</sup>

My aim in this study, however, is neither to give an historical account of the development of foreign policy, nor an examination of the pros and cons of particular policies. Nor is it to be judgemental, in terms of praising or criticising Nigeria and its leaders

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3. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

4. Kirk-Greene, A.H.M., The Formation of Foreign Service Cadres in Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda. Oxford University Institute of Commonwealth Studies, April 1973. Reprint Series No. 81, p. 18.

5. Ibid., p. 12.

6. Aluko, Olajide, Organisation and Administration of Nigerian Foreign Service, in Journal of Ife International Relations, occasional papers, published by the Department of International Relations, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, July 1981, p. 2.



for whatever there is. Admittedly each of these perspectives has its merits and therefore deserves attention. Detailed historical study of the various stages in the formation of a nation's foreign policy is necessary both as a background to subsequent research and as a source of reference. Also an attempt to analyse and explain policy outputs and effects is a worthy exercise, though it demands caution so as not to adulterate facts and misinform one's readers or to involve oneself in excess value-judgement and rationalisation.

To decide on a topic for research in a wide subject such as foreign policy is by no means an easy task, for a number of factors have to be borne in mind in choosing a topic. Most government activities do overlap, thereby posing the problem of defining the boundary of the subject. Some foreign policy decisions are the product of simple processes from the domestic environment and others result from complex and complicated activities within the same territorial jurisdiction. Many other foreign policy matters arise from the external environment - the world beyond a country's own sovereign jurisdiction. Some of such matters may be overt or covert, friendly or offensive and aggressive or defensive. No matter the source, it will require some decision. Some foreign policy decisions are based on known general principles or broad based guidelines. A number of decisions are based on tradition and precedence while yet some decisions cannot be traced to either of these. Most decisions too are ad-hoc which are later defended as being based on both general principles and precedents. This brings us to another problem that confronts students of foreign policy.

The implementation of foreign policy decisions (that is, foreign policy actions) could be ad-hoc depending on the prevailing circumstances at the time. Some other foreign policy actions could be based on consistent principles or precedence while some cannot be justified. This tendency creates problems in trying to relate certain actions to known principles and practices. There is also the difficulty of making a distinction between foreign policy action and its effect. The foreign policy action of some states may succeed in achieving a measure of influence over other governments because of the magnitude of the economic and military resources at their disposal or their capacity and readiness to exploit the weaknesses of the less privileged countries. But the action of relatively weaker states, no matter how well targeted may have little or no effect. In the latter case, observers may wonder if the weak state ever has a policy on the matter.

The third dimension of the problem is the relationship between foreign policy per se and foreign economic policy. Each tend to have different objectives, whereas they are indeed complementary, and the extent to which the same instruments of policy are used in their formulation and execution is difficult to determine.

The fourth aspect of the problem is to define the link between national defence and security on one hand and foreign policy on the other. For example, both the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics believe that their "domestic tranquility depends on security and stability abroad" while security and stability abroad depend respectively on their "willingness and ability to intervene in the domestic affairs of other peoples".<sup>7</sup> Similarly there is a

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7. Gurtov, Melvin, The United States Against the Third World - Antinationalism and Intervention. Praeger Publishers. New York, 1974, pp. 4-6.

a common belief in Nigeria that its national security is inextricably linked with the security of the African continent and that its national faith and destiny is directly related to the faith and destiny of all black peoples of the world. These linkages inevitably widen the scope of foreign policy and therefore make analysis cumbersome.

In this study, our investigation will focus on the making of Nigerian foreign policy. This will involve analysis and explanation of the underlying bases of foreign policy making, the environment and types of input from there, the structures that make foreign policy and how they make it. One intricate but stimulating aspect of the study is the differing attitudes toward policy-making. At every time and on every issue, some people - writers as well as practitioners - deplore the approach or method by which a policy is made because it lacks a scientific approach. These people want a substantial amount of information and analysis to be put into policy-making. They would want also a mechanism for verification and monitoring policy outcomes in order to ensure that the desired effects are achieved. Another group want policy-making to be pragmatic and result oriented. In this case, they would want to see policy-making determined by political considerations. A typical example of these differences in attitude towards policy-making occurred in Nigeria's Ministry of External Affairs in 1974 and 1980 leading to rifts between the Commissioner (i.e. Minister) for External Affairs and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry. In 1974 the Permanent Secretary succeeded in convincing the Commissioner and thereafter wielded considerable influence in many aspects of policy-making but in the 1980 episode the reverse was the case. The Minister claimed to be the Chief Executive of the



Ministry and that he should have overall authority on all aspects of the policy - including the decision to post or reassign any policy-staff.<sup>8</sup> A third group of people are those who believe that policy-making should be determined by economic considerations. Instances abound of people who question why diplomatic missions should be maintained abroad at such high costs when the state of the nation's economy is lagging. Others in the group argue that siting of diplomatic missions, or indeed any external involvement, should be in those countries and on those issues where it is possible not only to attain some political objectives but also achieve substantial mutual economic benefits.

In Nigeria as perhaps many other countries, there is a deep conflict among the three groups. This conflict runs through the whole structure of government and affects the recruitment and placement of policy-staff. It also affects the type of policy they produce. Consequently, it is difficult for an observer to understand who makes Nigerian foreign policy, how the policy is made, and why they prefer a particular policy and not the other. Given the situation, it is even more difficult to identify the origin and cause of lapses in policy-making. It also compounds a critical evaluation of Nigeria's foreign policy output. It is my conviction that a study of the structure and processes of policy formulation will facilitate an understanding of policy outcome.

This study therefore is an attempt to identify and analyse certain theoretical concepts and principles underlying the formulation and execution of Nigerian foreign policy and to examine the structure

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8. "Policy-staff" refers to all those designated as "External Affairs Officers" and who belong to the "branch A" cadre of the service.

of foreign policy machinery and how it functions within its environmental setting. In so doing, we may contribute to the effort to fill the hiatus that characterises the literature on Nigerian international relations.

It must be stated that the foreign policy process is a complex and sophisticated subject. Nevertheless it is fascinating and demands caution. According to Lincoln Bloomfield, the study of foreign policy making is about the "How?" and to some extent the "Why?" but not the "What?" of foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, William Jenkins, in his critical examination of analytical approaches to the study of public policy opined that the analyst must try to separate policy content or the substance of policy from policy process - i.e. the given set of methods, strategies and techniques by which a policy is made. This he argued, is because "process is a central, if not the central focus ..... that a conceptual understanding of the policy is fundamental to an analysis of public policy".<sup>10</sup> This view is pertinent particularly as it will enable us to attain the objectives and goal of this work with minimum diversion and distraction. We will therefore try to concentrate on the process and not the content of foreign policy, except for the purpose of illustration.

This study of the foreign policy process of Nigeria involves five basic tasks. The first is to trace the evolutionary process of Nigerian foreign policy. The second is to identify and define the principles of Nigerian foreign policy. Third, we will try to foster understanding of the environment, both domestic and external,

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9. Bloomfield, Lincoln P, The Foreign Policy Process: A Modern Primer. Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey, 1982, p. xii.

10. Jenkins, W.I., Policy Analysis: A Political and Organisational Perspective. Martin Robertson & Company Ltd., London, 1978, p. 16. See also Simon, H., Administrative Behaviour. Free Press, 1947 and Allison, Graham, The Essence of Decision. Little, Brown, 1971. Both share the view that a focus on the process of decision making is a key to understanding policy and administration.

of the country's foreign policy as well as to distinguish from the environment, the major sources of input into foreign policy making. Fourth, to try to identify who really makes Nigerian foreign policy and how it is made. The fifth objective is to create awareness of the factors that affect Nigeria's practice of foreign policy and to suggest solutions. If there exists a distinction between the aims and objectives, such a distinction could equally be made between objectives and goals. Thus, the ultimate goal, which ought to be borne in mind, is to contribute positively to improvement in the Nigerian foreign policy by fostering awareness, among its practitioners, of the mechanics and principles of their work.

#### (11) METHODOLOGY:

The approach in this study is analytical. By analysis we mean the breaking down of a phenomenon into component parts for description and explanation. A number of other theoretical models could be used for the explanation of political activities in general and foreign policy in particular. The choice, however, depends partly on the writer and partly on the kinds of questions that are likely to arise from the subject matter. In foreign policy process particularly, issues generate from both within the government and the environment to enter the policy machinery, information flows into the machinery, public expectations, anxieties and demands are directed to the government; these change to a series of decisions from which policies emerge and are implemented. These bits and pieces of events are no doubt fragmentary and therefore raise some questions. Are all the activities performed by one person (a unit or a structure) or by different persons (different units or structures) of the government? How can these fragmentary activities be linked



so that such decisions and actions could be understood as the product (output) of a co-ordinated process rather than of different parts or personalities. These questions will lead to the adoption of a policy process model for a logical and consistent analysis of the way foreign policy is made.

However, Professor Dudley<sup>11</sup> has warned of the inherent danger of misrepresentation of African politics if the conceptual constructs designed for the political activities of the capitalist western states are not carefully employed to describe the African political scene. He recognised also that similar dangers also exist even in the use of the models to describe western politics. The same dilemma led William Jenkins to devote much of his profound book<sup>12</sup> "to explore theoretical developments in policy studies arising from different intellectual origins and to ask how complete is the explanation they yield?" These raise fundamental questions as to which approach or combination of approaches could be best used to explain policy processes and outcomes. After examining some of the models on decision making, like the Rational Behaviour Approach, the Incremental Bargaining model and political and organisational perspectives, Jenkins posited that "there is no one best way"<sup>13</sup> of analysing political behaviour in general and public policy in particular. Thus it is hoped that our choice of the analytical model will help in the explanation of the subject.

### (iii) SCOPE

The making of foreign policy is not concerned just with governmental outputs in terms of policy statements and follow-up actions.

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11. Dudley, Billy J, An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics, Macmillan Press Ltd., Nigeria, 1983, pp. 13-17.

12. Jenkins, W.I., Policy Analysis: A Political and Organisational Perspective, Martin Robertson, London, 1978.

13. Ibid., p. 20.

It involves much more than that. A number of individuals, groups, organisations and factors are involved in policy making. The processes are also complex and the requirements are varied. Many foreign policy-makers have often asked the question, Who makes Nigerian foreign policy? Even among foreign office staff, it is common to end discussions with the expression "that is left to our policy maker". To many, it may seem surprising to hear that the Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), the National Sports Commission, the Nigerian Medical Association and the ordinary citizens etc. are involved in varying degrees in foreign policy-making. The fact of their involvement is obscured by the complexity of the policy-making processes.

To understand the scope of the policy-making process requires a consideration of how issues generate and the series of bargaining, concessions and compromises involved in harmonising them. According to Lindblom, the study of policy making begins with a consideration of

"how policy problems arise and appear on the agenda of government decision makers, then how people formulate issues for action, next how legislative or other action follows, how administrators subsequently implement the policy, and finally at the end of the process, how policy is evaluated".<sup>14</sup>

Also there are other factors involved which must be considered if one is to understand the scope of policy making. These are factors like resource competition and national economic capacity, public demands and expectations, socio-cultural idiosyncracies, personal interests of the elite, national expectations and goals,

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14. Lindblom, Charles E., The Policy-Making Process. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980, p. 3.



all combining to form a fraction of the factors that come into play in foreign policy making. The scope includes a consideration of another group of factors such as

"the characteristics of the participants, what parts or roles they play, what authority and other powers they hold, and how they deal with and control each other".<sup>15</sup>

Finally by a stretch of imagination, one could appreciate the multiplicity of other international factors in the formulation of policy to govern relations between one country and others of diverse interests, having their peculiar internal competitions, economic problems and security threats, real or imagined. In which case, the making of foreign policy would necessitate some knowledge or assumptions of the other actors' background, objectives and modus operandi. Since such policies will result in both action and effect on the interacting partners, the making of the policy will neither be unmindful of the overall implications and capacity to absorb the effect by the receivers nor ignore their retaliatory capability.

All these mean that the scope of foreign policy process of any country, be it Brazil, Britain, China or Nigeria, embraces numerous elements and political processes that are internal to the country and those that are external to it but internal to the other countries with which it maintains interaction, directly or indirectly. We have tried to reflect these broadly in the design for this research but all cannot be examined in detail because the scope of our work must of necessity be limited.

This thesis is divided into five parts with each part consisting of two chapters. Chapter one states the aims, objectives and goals as well as the scope and methodology of the research. The second

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15. Ibid., p. 2.

chapter provides an overview of Nigeria, its political background, and the genesis of its foreign policy. In part Two, while chapter three tries to explain the meaning of the concept "foreign policy" and to provide a working definition, chapter four will attempt to determine what constitute the principles of Nigerian foreign policy. Part Three is concerned with the environments of foreign policy, which for analytic reasons have been classified into two - the internal and the external environments. Chapter five analyses the inputs from the internal environment while chapter six identifies and examines the external sources of input into foreign policy decision-making. Chapter seven of part Four deals with the examination of the components of foreign policy machinery while chapter eight analyses the functional processes. In part Five, chapter nine examines the factors affecting Nigeria's practice of foreign policy and chapter ten reviews the practice of foreign policy and tries to determine its direction and distinguishing features.

## CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW(1) A SYNOPSIS

A few observations about Nigeria will help not only to form a general background to the study but also will set the criteria in terms of which the elements and process of foreign policy as well as its output and effects may be understood, assessed and objectively applied in comparative analysis. Such observations hopefully, will help correct certain erroneous impressions about Nigeria. For instance, Shaw and Fasehun contended that despite a shift in both the sub- and super-structure of Nigeria since independence and the fact that the basis of its greatness has been seen to change, "there is a near unanimous consensus amongst Nigerian leaders and scholars that their country is destined to lead Africa, due mainly to Nigeria's continued and expanded incorporation within the global economy because of oil-based interaction and industrialisation".<sup>1</sup>

This view gives two impressions - that Nigeria is engaged in a leadership contest in Africa and that Nigeria's position in the global system is because of oil. There are also attempts to represent Nigeria as a peripheral state, by applying dependency theory to interpret her external behaviour.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to these views, we argue that Nigeria can be presented in a better perspective as an international actor in its own right, like any other sovereign

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1. Shaw, M.T. and Fasehun, O., "Nigeria in the World System: Alternative Approaches, Explanations and Projections" in Journal of Modern African Studies (1980), pp. 552-553.

2. See Sonni, Tyoden, Development Strategies and Foreign Policy in peripheral states: The Political Economy of Nigeria's External Relations 1960-1975. Ph.D. Thesis, 1980, University of Lancaster.



state.

In the first instance, the notion of its economic dependency with the West ignores the fact that international relations generally are based on interdependence of states. As Nigeria needs the Western market to buy their products and sell its own too, so does the West need Nigerian markets to sell its products and buy materials for its industries. In actual fact, the West is more eager to sell to Nigeria than Nigeria is to buy from the West. If, therefore, Nigeria is said to be dependent on its imports from the West so it has to be said that the West is dependent on its exports to Nigeria. Dependency in international relations is reciprocal. To apply the dependency theory to the one and not the other is a misrepresentation of the phenomenon of interdependence. Moreover, in an objective sense Nigeria's economic relationship with the West cannot be seen as that of dependency because Nigeria pays for what it buys and also retains the freedom to buy from any other market elsewhere. The issue of dependency arises when a country cannot buy or sell elsewhere or is unable to pay for its imports and is therefore subject to blackmail by its trading partner. Furthermore, in terms of investment in capital development and industrialisation, attempts have been made since 1960 to diversify investment in Nigeria. There is a measure of diversification also in the export of Nigerian products (see chapter 9, table 4). The argument is that Nigeria cannot be seen as a peripheral state to any other.

Second, on the assumption of its claims to leadership in Africa, the view overlooked the distinction between "leadership" — the act or right of control and influence, and "role" — the performance of one's duty or function that is either self-conceived or assigned.

A corollary of this is the lack of distinction between international or continental leadership and national role. If the distinctions are made it will become clear that Nigeria has not acted in any way or arrogated to itself the right to control or dictate and direct the affairs of any African country. In the absence of hegemonistic ambitions, it is inappropriate to interpret the country's role to mean assumption of leadership. The conception of Nigeria's national role in the world as a result of several factors, some of which are to be discussed here, is often misconstrued as its "claims to leadership in Africa."

It is difficult to identify any Nigerian action on major African issues that reflects a hegemonistic stance in Africa. The fear of pax-Nigeriana or pax-Africana was allayed on independence by the Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa when he declared before the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York that Nigeria, "though a large and populous country, has absolutely no territorial or expansionist intentions".<sup>3</sup> Nigeria's respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all African states was amply demonstrated between 1962-63 by its opposition to the proposal of the radical Heads of States and governments in Africa for a political fusion of all African countries as the most practical measure to achieve African unity.

Even with the advent of the military in Nigerian politics, the then Commissioner for External Affairs, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, demonstrated the consistency which characterises Nigeria's

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3. Balewa, A.T., Mr. Prime Minister: A selection of speeches made by Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1964, p. 50.

inter-African relations by reiterating "that Nigeria has no territorial ambition and no desire to dominate any other country or force her leadership on any other country or group of countries".<sup>4</sup> Arikpo explained that Nigeria's pragmatic approach to the development of African unity succeeded, "without assuming a blustering posture and without any attempts to force our views on the rest of Africa", because of our policy of quiet diplomacy, of dialogue and persuasion. But, he continued, "while we work for consensus whenever possible, we never ever compromise on our established basic principles and always refuse to be pushed around by any country or group of member countries within the OAU whatever their claims to leadership, economic or military strength".<sup>5</sup>

Third, on the impression that Nigeria's activities and posture in world affairs is basically dependent on her oil economy, it would be plausible and acceptable if it can be said that oil revenues have boosted her economy and added impetus to Nigeria's activities. Because of these misconceptions, a brief view of the country's economy is necessary.

#### THE ECONOMY

Before the production of petroleum on a significant commercial scale, Nigeria was a major producer and exporter of a range of other primary products, notably palm oil and kernel, groundnuts, cocoa and cotton. It has the best quality tropical timber. In terms of minerals, Nigeria is also rich in mineral resources most of which form the basis for the industries in the country, e.g. limestone, iron ore and coal. Between 1960 and 1965, agricultural products

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4. Lecture given by Dr. Okoi Arikpo, Commissioner for External Affairs at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs on 31st July, 1974. From Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 1, no. 1, July 1975, p. 2.

5. Ibid.



accounted for some two-thirds of Nigeria's gross domestic product at factor cost.<sup>6</sup> The above facts of the Nigerian economy prior to the advent of oil are shown in the table below.

Table 1

Extract from Gross Domestic Product at 1962-63 Factor Cost (N£ Million)<sup>7</sup>

	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	798.9	774.9	802.9	868.9	865.7
Mining (including petroleum)	14.9	21.7	27.0	29.4	39.8
Petroleum alone	3.8	9.9	14.5	16.4	25.9
Other Minerals	11.1	11.8	12.5	13.0	13.9
Source: Federal Office of Statistics; Annual Abstract of Statistics, Lagos, 1972, p. 146					

Thus, in the first five years of independence, Nigeria's growth and international status derived more from its human and other resources than from petroleum. Perhaps a comparison of Nigeria with some other countries within the same continent will shed more light on the point.

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6. Federal Office of Statistics; Annual Abstract of Statistics, Lagos, 1964, p. 143.

7. The value of the products have been estimated in Nigerian pounds because at that time the country's monetary unit was the Pound (N£).

Table 2

**Gross Domestic Product at Current Factor Cost  
of Selected African Countries in Millions of US Dollars**

Country	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
TUNISIA	541.1	607.8	623.8	665.9	713.0	815.2
MOROCCO	1,628.3	1,612.5	1,908.9	2,130.2	2,262.6	2,395.0
UGANDA	425.9	437.9	438.6	492.5	546.3	625.7
ETHIOPIA	N/A	948.0	976.0	1,020.8	1,162.8	1,326.8
IVORY COAST	493.8	550.1	563.1	654.2	785.1	804.5
LIBERIA	206.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	259.7	278.0
ZAMBIA	560.0	541.2	534.2	558.6	650.9	768.0
KENYA	631.4	629.2	683.5	851.2	915.9	929.9
LIBYA	N/A	N/A	428.4	632.8	1,058.4	1,414.0
EGYPT	3,136.1	3,245.5	3,594.4	4,001.1	4,542.5	4,885.4
NIGERIA	3,142.4	3,322.8	3,683.1	4,080.0	4,629.0	4,912.8

Source: UN - Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, 1968, volume 1: Individual country data, New York, 1969.

Nigeria's prominence in Africa pre-dates the petroleum era. The bases of such prominence and role lie on a variety of factors, of which petroleum is just one, whose impact has been mainly on tempo and dynamics.

However, apart from the "oil impression" and the differing interpretations of statements of Nigerian leaders and scholars, Henry Bretton justifies the attention Nigeria receives on the ground that it is the largest and most populous African state, which



in terms of its potential power and influence may become "the most important country in the African continent" as well as "a political anchor for a system of free African states, and the fate of all Africa may hinge on its survival".<sup>8</sup> In many other textbooks, newspapers and journals, Nigeria has been variously described as "the Giant of Africa", "the stronghold of democracy in Africa", "the world's largest independent black nation", "the epitome of Renascent Africa", "a unique meeting place of the black race", etc. Whether these are apt descriptions or not, they are bound to lead to some misconceptions and assumptions if the reader is not made to gain a correct idea of the country's natural endowments and what distinguishes it from other state-actors, including its historical and geo-political circumstances as well as socio-cultural and economic characteristics. It is also important for the reader to know that the behaviour of an international actor is a reflection of both its cultural idiosyncrasy and historical circumstances as well as the prevailing conception of its geo-political position.

In this chapter, therefore, I would like to begin by discussing the relevance of Nigeria's strategic location on the continent, its physical size, population and historical experience, national economy, demands of international politics etc. to the conduct of its inter-African relations and international relations today. I believe this approach is important for an understanding of the basic facts about the country will provide the necessary background for appreciating and interpreting Nigeria's external relations in better perspective.

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8. Bretton, Henry L., Power and Stability in Nigeria: The Politics of Decolonisation. Frederick A. Praeger Inc., New York, 1972, p. 3.

## SIZE AND LOCATION

Nigeria occupies a total land area of 913,072,64 square kilometres. It is thus one of the largest sovereign territories in Africa and about four times the size of Britain. Lying entirely within the tropics and almost in the centre of the curve made by the continent of Africa, Nigeria occupies a place that is nearly equidistant from the extreme corners of the continent. In addition to its physical size and location, Nigeria is by far the most populous country in Africa and the world's largest country of black people. With a population of about 100 million<sup>9</sup> Nigeria ranks as the fifth largest state in the world. Classical political theory as exemplified by Hobbes ascribes to governments the duty of providing order and security to its people. In effect the defence and protection of citizens is the primary responsibility of governments. This responsibility looms high where there exist high population, large size of territory and the consciousness of a strategic location. The contention is that the geographical location, size and population of a country, amongst other things, not only constitute its immediate environment but also form the basis of its own assumption of self-image as well as the conception of its national obligation and role.

Generally, Nigeria's size, location, population and natural endowments within the continent dictate for it certain roles in Africa. They at the same time set certain limits upon its achievements. That these factors have a great influence on

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9. West Africa, no. 3443 of 8 August 1983, p. 805.

Nigeria is argued by Thurston Shaw:

"geographical factors which persist over long periods of time are likely to assert and reassert themselves in a manner which helps to give a constant 'personality' to a country".<sup>10</sup>

Norman Pounds also wrote:

"in international politics, power is basically related to the area, population, resources and industrial potential of the state, as modified by geographical location and level of technology".<sup>11</sup>

He argued that the primary objective of the decision maker in any state is to achieve the well-being and prosperity of the state itself and that since "territory" is an inherent part of a state, self-preservation means "defending its control over territory". Thus, "the basic objective of the foreign policy of all states is the preservation of territorial integrity and political independence". He stressed that the security of the state is the dominant objective of policy vis-a-vis other states, whatever may be the political strategy employed to attain it.<sup>12</sup>

## HISTORY

Nigeria is a conglomeration of various Empires and Kingdoms and Community Republics, with each possessing a distinct history, culture, language, religion, economy and government. They include the Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Edo, Fulani, Kanuri, Ibibio, Tiv, Itsekiri, Ijaw, Urhobo, Efik, Igbirra and Ogoni etc. These were distinct political units of considerable antiquity. They were heterogeneous

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10. Shaw, Thurston, Nigeria: Its Archaeology and early History. Thames & Hudson Ltd., London, 1978, p. 15.

11. Pounds, Norman J.G., Political Geography. International Student Edition. McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1963, p. 17.

12. Ibid.



in culture (different in their values, beliefs and mores), political attitudes, structures and processes, characteristics which have persisted up to the present moment. Among Nigerians today, people who belong to the same culture group regard themselves as offsprings of a common ancestry. Within each cultural group, therefore, there is a sense of community and collectivity which, in the event of external issues, necessitate coming together for collective action to protect and preserve the integrity of the community. This is a feature of the cultural diversity which fosters tribalism and nepotism in Nigeria. Each cultural group had its system of law and order, and differing forms of government, based on radically different conceptions of rule, from theocracy to a form of republicanism.

Under British colonial administration, Nigeria went through a number of structural institutional and cultural changes. The first and most noticeable of these is the amalgamation of the heterogeneous political units to form one political entity by 1914. The amalgamated territory was divided into two provinces (the northern and southern provinces) administered by separate Lieutenant Governors who were responsible to the Governor General.<sup>13</sup> Later, for administrative convenience, there was a division of the southern provinces into two, namely the western and eastern provinces, with the River Niger as the boundary while the northern province rather than being divided was enlarged through merging with the autonomous republics in the middle-belt zone (i.e. which could have been a central region) of Nigeria. As a result, the northern

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13. Coleman, James S., Nigeria: Background to Nationalism. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1960, p. 46.

province (later region) took up three quarters of the total land area and about half the population of the whole country. Efforts to correct the imbalance, as reflected in the demands for the creation of more regions, were resisted by the colonial administration.<sup>14</sup> This left the impression among some Nigerian leaders that the British government deliberately decided to keep the backward northern region so large as to dominate the country, as the surest means to make Nigeria remain for a long time pro-British and dependent on the British government. However, it is not yet clear what were the actual position and action of the British colonial officials on this issue. But according to John P. Mackintosh:

"It is quite possible and indeed probable that the British officials serving in the north may have wished not only to preserve the unity of Nigeria but to preserve the unity of the north within Nigeria .... While Dr. Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo ... at times indulged in wordy warfare, accusation and challenges, ... Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa always had easy and confidential relations with Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, the Governor of the north. They discussed the problems of self-government and the line to be taken by northern representatives at the various conferences. Sir Bryan was quite clear that any subdivision of the north would be disastrous".<sup>15</sup>

This type of political structure established by the colonial administration tilted dangerously the geo-political balance of the country. Post and Vickers' view is that "the colonial political frame inherited from the British at Independence served not to hold the country together, but rather to reinforce conflicts which

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14. Post, K.W.J., and Vickers, Michael, Structure and Conflict in Nigeria 1960-65. Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 1973, pp. 41-42.

15. Mackintosh, John P., Nigerian Government and Politics. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1966, pp. 32-33.

together were to exert massive stress threatening the persistence of the political system",<sup>16</sup> with obvious implications for foreign policy making.

Nigeria's socio-cultural background and history produce some side effects that have a bearing on this study. First, the amalgamation of such a large territory and its peoples into one political unit or country ascribes to Nigeria its unique size and potentials as well as a giant role in Africa and the world. Second, the interactions among the heterogeneous groups within this larger entity generate friction and tension on the political system, due to diversity in their unity. Such diversity and friction help to undermine the effectiveness of policy making in Nigeria. Every successive government in Nigeria spends much time and resources trying to convince the diverse groups that its policies are in the national interest. Although every nation in the world has its peculiar diversity, the Nigerian case was complicated and compounded by the unequal treatment given to the different provinces by the colonial government. While European religion and culture were imposed upon the southern provinces, the northern provinces were allowed to perpetuate cultural separateness. In the northern part of the country, the colonial government decided "not to interfere with the Islamic religion and customs in return for pledges of loyalty",<sup>17</sup> a decision that encouraged "innate Islamic conservatism ... and reinforced natural parochialism".<sup>18</sup> These factors are sources of political instability and crisis which affect policy-making in Nigeria.

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16. Post and Vickers, op. cit., p. 43.

17. Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nigeria: The Political and Economic Background. Oxford University Press, London, 1960, p. 5.

18. Ibid.



At the time Nigeria emerged on the arena of international politics in October 1960 to play "The Game Nations Play", the rules of the game had already been determined by the older actors in conformity with their socio-cultural norms and national preferences. The rules were therefore alien and some I shall argue were incompatible with the norms of the new nation. Moreover, the techniques of international politics remain the secret of each actor while the principle is the preservation of the actor's interest. These no doubt are at variance with an altruistic society, accustomed to being their brother's keeper and used to communal life as well as to collective action for the general good of all. Having found itself on this 'anomalies' arena, Nigeria was thus like a newly recruited player into an old club of professionals. As experience shows, most newly recruited players on the field tend to display much energy and enthusiasm, seeking to make their mark within a record time. Sometimes amidst burning enthusiasm and attendant illusion, the player is dribbled out of the way by the older and more seasoned player. Such is the predicament of Nigeria, like other new nations in international politics. This leads to the final observation here that many observers and critics of Nigerian foreign policy have tended to overlook the simple fact of Nigeria's 'newness' as a foreign policy actor in comparison with more dominant actors like, say, Britain, France, USA and USSR who have been in the game for more than a century. Given the factors of its newness, historical antecedence, economic circumstances, the imperialist constraints of its external environment and the anomalous international system, it shall be argued, contrary to the views of for example Arnold and Idang,<sup>19</sup> that Nigeria has risen within twenty five years to a

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19. Arnold, Guy, Modern Nigeria. Longman Group Limited, London, 1977, p. 133; Idang, Gordon J., Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy 1960-1966, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1973, p. 13.

prominent position in the community of nations. It has made an outstanding impact on the global system and its foreign policy has been of a high profile, dynamic and purposeful.



(11) THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Nigeria is made up of nineteen states (at the moment) and has a federal system of government. Constitutionally the powers of the federal government are provided in the Exclusive Legislative List while those of the state are in the Residual List. There are also certain matters in the Concurrent List which both the federal and state governments can act upon but in the event of conflict, the federal legislation will take precedence. In 1960 the federation consisted of three regions - the north, east and west. By 1963 a fourth region - the mid west - was created. Nigeria was thus a federation of four regions and had a parliamentary form of government. The political parties include the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and the Action Group (AG). All contested the elections of 1959 and 1964 in which NPC won. In the first Republic, there was a President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, and a Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

A number of forces<sup>1</sup> (to be explained) combined to produce tension and stress within the Nigerian political system. These resulted in both weakening the government and total breakdown of the electoral process. Consequently, parliamentarianism was overthrown in a military coup on 15th January, 1966. A new military government emerged, headed by Major General Aguiyi Ironsi but the forces of destabilization in the Nigerian federation remained at work under the military regime. They caused

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1. These include forces arising from the structural imbalance of the federation, regionalism, ethnic minority revolts, unhealthy rivalry between political parties and rigging at elections.

a breakdown of law and order leading to another military coup on 29th July, 1966 with Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon becoming the head of the federal military government. Under Gowon Nigeria had three years of civil war (1967-70). The civil war necessitated certain structural changes like the abolition of the regions and the creation of a twelve states structure (north six, south six, with east three and west three). These changes corrected the structural imbalance in the Nigerian political system inherited at independence. It was hoped that the established balance in the political structure would, after the civil war, usher in a stable political system and workable electoral process. The twelve states structure was also aimed at reducing some of the ills of the first Republic such as ethnic domination, cut-throat competition for political power and denying of the minorities equal access to power.

After the war, some of the forces persisted and were reinforced by another set of forces<sup>2</sup> thereby producing a chain reaction that culminated in the third military coup on 29th July 1975.

The third military government was headed by Brigadier (later General) Murtala Muhammed, who quickly reintroduced imbalance in the structure of the federation through the creation of more states. Seven new states were created (north four, south three - with one in the east and two in the west). The federation thus came to have nineteen states, with north ten and south nine. Another major change in the structure of the federation was Muhammed's transfer of the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja in the north.

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2. The additional forces became prominent after the war and include: large scale corruption, increased interest of the military in politics, the rise of the 'Mafia' groups (Kaduna and Ikene Mafias) etc.

However, the contradictions produced by the underlying forces in Nigeria exposed the government perhaps to other external forces, which combined to bring about the attempted military coup on 13th February, 1976 and the death of Murtala Muhammed. Brigadier (later General) Olusegun Obasanjo then became the head of the federal military government. After the attempted military coup, most Nigerians became tired of military rule. The military rulers themselves became suspicious of each other. The leadership was fearful of another coup. Ultimately the military voluntarily returned the country to the democratic political process. On 1st October, 1979 (after thirteen years of military rule) an elected civilian government headed by an executive President, Alhaji Shehu Shagari came to power in Nigeria after protracted electoral and legal contests.

In the second Republic, Nigeria retained its federal structure but changed the form of government to the Presidential type. There were five recognised political parties - the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) and Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) - that contested the 1979 elections.

At this time there appeared to be less regionalism and ethnic minority problems. Instead, there were: cut-throat competition for electoral victory by the five parties; large scale corruption; and influence of the enlarged Mafia groups in the alliance with the military oligarchy. The second Republic lasted for four years and was overthrown by a group of army officers on 31st December, 1983 - Nigeria's fifth military coup. Thus the federation came again under military rule, with Major General Muhammadu Buhari at the head of the administration. Dissatisfaction



and discontent grew in the military among two distinct groups. The first group were those concerned that the military administration was controlled by the same people of the previous military regime that surrendered some four years earlier. The second group were those who felt sympathetic to the ousted civil government of President Shagari. By 27th August, 1985 the sixth military coup occurred in Nigeria and Major General Ibrahim Babangida took over as head of the federal military government but unlike his predecessors has assumed the designation of "President".

Despite changes in regime and regime leadership, the federal structure of government has persisted in Nigeria. However, the political system is obviously characterised by instability and crisis, which are likely to affect foreign policy-making in Nigeria. To understand in some detail, Nigeria's political system and its impact on foreign policy-making, we will now examine the outstanding features of the Nigerian federation. These include: regionalism; politics of ethnic minorities; politics of political parties; and military coups.

### Regionalism

Regional consciousness was a main feature of the Nigerian federation. This was encouraged by the initial federal structure of Nigeria, with three large regions - the north, east and west. One of the regions, the north, was larger in both size and population than the rest of the country put together, giving rise to what we have described earlier as the structural imbalance of the federation. Proposals both before and after independence to give the country a balanced structure by creating more regions out of the existing ones were



resisted.<sup>3</sup> The three regions were each dominated by a distinct ethnic group as follows - the northern region by the Hausa-Fulani peoples, the eastern region by the Igbo and the western region by the Yoruba. Within each region and alongside the dominant ethnic population were minority ethnic groups who relentlessly demanded recognition as regions separate from the three dominated by larger ethnic groups. For example in the north, there was the demand for a Middle Belt Region, in the east for a COR (Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers) Region and in the west for a Mid-West Region. These demands were in the form of protests and demonstrations, generating tension and stress on the political system. By 1963, the Mid-West Region was created out of the Western Region, while the agitation by the minorities in the other regions remained suppressed, leaving the impression that the northern and eastern based parties collaborated to dismember the western region, thereby reducing its political weight in the federation, while retaining the preponderant weight of the regions where they had their political bases. The obvious implication was that the north, with its predominant population, voting along regional lines, would at all times win every federal election to produce the head of government and also have enough majority to determine every national policy with or without the acquiescence of the three other regions. This condition was apparently unacceptable to political leaders from the east, west and mid-west regions.

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3. Northern Region of Nigeria; "Memorandum to the Minorities Commission from the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria", Government Printer, Kaduna 1958. See also "Decision of His Excellency the Governor on the claim for a revision of the inter-regional boundary between the Northern and Western Regions"; signed by Governor J.S. Macpherson at Government House, Lagos on 28th August, 1952. Refer Nigeria Gazette Extra-ordinary, No. 46, vol. 39 of 3rd September, 1952.

Associated with regionalism was the problem of unequal development, with its several implications. The disparity in educational development, in particular between the regions led to disparity in interpretation and application of national policies. There was divergent interpretation of the relationship between the regions in a federation on one hand and between the regional governments and the central government on the other. This disparity gave rise to fears and animosity which made it difficult for Nigerians from one region to secure employment in another. It became a matter of the north for the northerners, the east for the easterners and the west for the westerners. Regionalism as it existed in the first five years after independence fostered regional hostility instead of amity.

Another implication of the unequal development of the country is the desire by the less developed north to catch up with the south. Therefore northern leaders wanted more federal government investment in developing programmes in the north. This demand was seen by southerners as robbing Peter to pay Paul, or Obi to pay Oba. Due to the shortage of resources for development, demands were not met and the gap in regional development became conspicuous. As a result there began intense competition and rivalry among the component units in the federation. In fact, the consciousness of the inequality of opportunity has been the major source of acrimony in Nigerian political life, of which foreign policy is an aspect.

The disparity in development and notion of inequality of opportunity preoccupied the minds of the operators of the system so much that they were at every time experimenting with different

formulae in order to reduce discontent. For example, the populous but least developed northern region expounded the principle of "federal balance and federal character"<sup>4</sup> and has insisted on its application to correct the negative attributes of the disparity and to ensure a better distributive, not extractive, political system. The other regions in the south that are less populous and more developed, stress "merit based on educational qualification, experience and productivity" as the necessary criteria for recruitment and placement of all groups in the political system. Both principles reflect the desire by every region to have a fairer opportunity to participate in the political and economic process. As a result of the differing principles and the attendant demands, the federal government has always been confronted with the problem of how to reconcile the different units for the purpose of achieving national integration and as such little time and resources are given to broad policy matters.

#### Politics of Ethnic Minorities

The Nigerian political setting and the functioning of the system had been affected by the undefined position of the various minority ethnic groups that were left more or less like the appendages of the larger ethnic groups that dominated the regions. These minorities detested their position and therefore adopted various attitudes ranging from opposition to the regional government, to flirting between major parties and even sabotaging

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4. For detailed explanation, see Kirk-Greene, A.H.M., "The Federal Character of Nigeria: Boom of Contentment or Bone of Contention?" See also Olajunju, Tunji, "Federal Balance and Federal Character", both conference papers in Nigeria: The First Year of Civilian Rule: The operation of the constitution. The University, Keele, North Staffs, September 1980.



the efforts of their regional governments, thereby generating tension and confusion that helped to compound the operation of federalism in Nigeria. Post wrote at the time:

"They formed not only an internal opposition within society but external oppositions representing societies peripheral to the main one in each Region. Their aim was to sever the political connection between the minority societies which they represented and the larger one. For their parties then there were no rules of the game. They were free to adopt any tactics or arouse any passions which they felt would help them to attain an autonomous position for the minority societies which by and large they represented".<sup>5</sup>

The actions of the minorities and their peculiar relationship with the majorities here described as the politics of ethnic minorities were further demonstrated by the Tiv riots (1959-65), the Isaac Boro rebellion (1964), the agitations by various minority ethnic groups for their own regions within the federation and the insistence that the distribution of both political offices and social amenities must be done on the basis of equality of the component groups. The demands of the minorities were neglected throughout the colonial period but received only partial attention after independence and this was in 1963 when the minorities in the western region were carved out to form the Mid-West region. The demands for the right to separate regional government by the minorities in the eastern and northern regions remained suppressed and ignored up until 1967.

#### Politics of Political Parties

The growth of political parties and their activities represent another feature of Nigerian politics which has had considerable impact on public policy making and implementation. The struggle at the

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5., Post, K.W.J., The Nigerian Federal Elections of 1959: Politics and Administration in a Developing Political System, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, pp. 68-69.

1959 federal elections to win public support and catch votes, as the only condition for a party to control the federal government, led the parties and their leaders to embark on a grass-root campaign during which tribal and ethnic sentiments were invoked. By 1960 the major political parties were identified with the regions where they won a majority of the votes and formed governments which coincided with the respective regions (of origin) of their party leaders. Thus the NPC formed the government in the northern region, the NCNC controlled the east and the Action Group the west. There were a number of other minor parties identified with various ethnic groups and interests in Nigeria, some of which have been referred to above. A vivid account of the development and activities of the major political parties in Nigeria up to 1965 has been provided by Sklar, Post and Mackintosh et al.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, we must quickly but briefly review the parties as essential features of the Nigerian political background, so as to highlight their role in and impact on foreign policy.

#### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIAN CITIZENS (NCNC)

The NCNC was the dominant force in Nigerian nationalism from its foundation in 1944 until 1960 when Nigeria became independent.<sup>7</sup> The first President of the NCNC was the father of Nigerian nationalism, Herbert Macaulay and its secretary was

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6. Sklar, Richard L, Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1963; Post, K.W.J., The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959: Politics and Administration in a Developing Political System, Oxford University Press, 1963; and Mackintosh, J.P. et al, Nigerian Government and Politics. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1966.

7. Post, K.W.J., op. cit., p. 27.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (who later became the President). As Akinyemi has said:

"The NCNC was the first and for a long time, the only national political organisation in Nigeria. It was national in the sense that it had branches all over the country and that it was not identified with any particular region or ethnic group".<sup>8</sup>

However, in the late 1950s and in the post-independence era, the NCNC did not win enough seats at the federal elections and therefore could not form the government at the national level. It won the elections in the eastern region, dominated by the Ibos. It formed the government of the region and established its stronghold there. Thus between 1959 and 1966, the NCNC was seen as a party of the easterners. Its activities and views on national issues were regarded as those of the dominant tribe in the region - a factor that largely undermined the nationalist zeal and effort of the party even when offering its co-operation with the other parties as a junior partner in alliance to preserve the unity of the federation and achieve inter-regional harmony in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the NCNC remained notable as the most powerful Nigerian organisation in the awakening of political consciousness and demand for independence.<sup>9</sup> In the first Republic, it became a major exponent of Nigerian unity by playing the role of a balancer in the almost hostile relationship between the Government and Opposition.

On foreign policy the NCNC advocated the following positions for Nigeria in world affairs:

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8. Akinyemi, A.B., Foreign Policy and Federalism: The Nigerian Experience. Ibadan University Press, 1974, p. 29.

9. Coleman, James S., Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960, p. 265.



- (a) Commitment to the liberation of all peoples of the world from colonisation and imperialism.<sup>10</sup>
- (b) The promotion of inter-African relations and co-operation. The NCNC viewed Pan-Africanism as a desirable philosophy but opposed the suggestion for uniting all African states.
- (c) Abhorrence of racial discrimination and the elimination of apartheid.
- (d) Non-alignment in world politics.
- (e) Peaceful co-existence and cordial relationship with all nations of the world irrespective of religion, geographical position or ideology.
- (f) Mutual economic co-operation with other nations.

Generally, the NCNC emphasised the need for dynamism and effectiveness in the conduct of Nigeria's international relations. We shall see (in the section below) to what extent its views prevailed in the foreign policy of a contemporary Nigeria.

#### THE NORTHERN PEOPLES CONGRESS (NPC)

With the growth of nationalism and development of political consciousness, some educated Nigerians in the northern region felt the need to form an organisation through which they could (a) participate in the shaping of the emerging political and economic structures in Nigeria; (b) prevent the NCNC from extending its influence and control on the people in the northern region; and (c) reform the system of native administration which they regarded as autocratic. They formed a political association, the Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa (JMA)<sup>11</sup> in 1948, which became the NPC in 1950, shortly before the first federal elections.

The dominant personalities in the NPC in later years, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (Sardauna of Sokoto) and Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa were not founder members of the party. They joined

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10. See Azikiwe, Nnamdi, A selection from the speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Cambridge University Press, 1961.

11. See Sklar, Richard L., op. cit., p. 91.

after it had won the regional election of 1951.<sup>12</sup> It was, however, through their membership that the NPC secured the full support and co-operation of the Sultan and the Emirs who were the most respected traditional rulers and representatives of the Fulani aristocracy. In later years, Sir Ahmadu Bello became the President-General and Balewa the Vice-President. Their influence in the party coincided with a shift within it from the mild reformism of the JMA and the associated Northern Elements Progressive Association (to which most JMA leaders belonged) to a conservatism well expressed by the Sardauna:

"We were never militant nationalists as some were. We were sure that in God's good time we would get the power. The British had promised this frequently and we were content to rest on these promises".<sup>13</sup>

This conservatism protected the NPC leadership from the fate of NEPA (whose mainly civil servant leaders were dismissed or transferred for engaging in overt political activity). Indeed, too, it gained them favourable treatment from the colonial authorities. It yielded in the long run higher political dividend, as for example it enabled the NPC to retain control of the largest region from where it secured the highest votes at every federal election and enjoyed the privilege of forming the government and leading the federation. In the first Republic, the NPC was the dominant party in Nigerian politics and by virtue of being the ruling party, it became the leading nationalist party in the country.

The NPC like the NCNC had its own foreign policy preferences although foreign policy first featured in the party's programme only

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12. Bello, Ahmadu (Alhaji Sir), My Life: The autobiography of Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 85.

13. Ibid., p. 86.



in 1959. The broader motives of the demand for self-government include the desire for Nigeria to take its place in the community of nations and to assume the responsibility and obligations thereof.

The specific foreign policy proposals of the NPC were:

- (i) Membership of the Commonwealth, seen as a "unifying factor in a troubled world".<sup>14</sup>
- (ii) To become a member of the United Nations Organisation and to abide by its principles and obligations.
- (iii) To maintain very close ties with the United Kingdom and friendly relations with all countries having common interests with Nigeria and respecting Nigeria's sovereignty.<sup>15</sup>
- (iv) To demonstrate interest in developments in the Islamic world. This led the party leader to advocate a Pan-Islamic organisation to include Nigeria and the Muslim states of North Africa, Middle East and Asia.<sup>16</sup>
- (v) To maintain friendly relations with all countries in the African continent. The NPC was, however, opposed to Pan-Africanism and condemned any attempt at a political union of African states whether on a regional or continental level. It insisted on the maintenance of the territories as inherited from colonial powers and urged that leaders of each African country should direct their energies to developing the potentialities latent in their respective countries.
- (vi) To adhere to a policy of military alignment with Western powers. The Party's 1959 election manifesto stated that the NPC would "rule out completely any idea of adopting a policy of neutrality in international affairs".<sup>17</sup> It acted accordingly and agreed to a proposal for military defence pact between Nigeria and Britain.

#### NORTHERN ELEMENTS PROGRESSIVE UNION (NEPU)

The Northern Elements Progressive Union was founded in

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14. Northern Region of Nigeria; Extract from an address by Sir Ahmadu Bello, in "Report of the Special Meeting of the Northern Regional Legislature", held on Wednesday 12th October, 1960, to mark the Nigerian Independence celebrations.

15. Akinyemi, A.B., op. cit., p. 19.

16. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

17. Claude, S. Philips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy. North Western University Press, 1964, p. 18.



August 1950 by the more radical members of the JMA purposely to facilitate the political socialisation and mobilisation of the common people in the northern region; to break away from the conservative circles in which the NPC was enmeshed; to secure a reform of the aristocratic emirate political institutions used by 'British imperialists' to rule the people; and to provide effective representation of the north in the constitutional review conferences. The leader of the party was Malam Aminu Kano, a teacher and devout muslim. the NEPU leaders attempted to retain their membership of NPC but were forced out by the conservative NPC leadership, thus underlining the hostile relationship that subsequently existed between the parties.

However, many of the educated class and common people embraced NEPU and became members. NEPU declared in its manifesto that its mission was "to secure the freedom of the 'Talakawa' (common people) from the vicious system of administration by the family-compact rulers supported by the British Imperialist Government".<sup>18</sup> The party's criticisms of and opposition to the northern social system earned it the disfavour of the Emirs and chiefs who worked against the possible victory of the party at any election, with considerable effect.<sup>19</sup>

NEPU's foreign policy preferences were as follows:

1. Nigeria should adhere to Pan-Africanism and work towards "a great African union".<sup>20</sup>
2. Nigeria should maintain fair and balanced relations with all countries, irrespective of ideological stand, religion or geo-political axis.

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18. Sklar, Richard L., op. cit., p. 95.

19. See Jalingo, Ahmadu Usman, "The radical traditions in northern Nigeria". Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1981.

20. House of Representatives Debates, January session 1960, pp. 77-8. Quoted in Akinyemi, A.B., op. cit., p. 21.

3. Nigeria should be non-aligned. Malam Aminu Kano denounced any form of military alliance with any of the super powers and was vehemently opposed to the Balewa government's proposed Anglo-Nigerian defence pact.
4. The liberation of all African countries from colonial rule.
5. Contrary to the views of the NPC on relations with Muslim states, NEPU urged that Nigeria's relationship with any muslim country should be based on the objective criteria of national interest and not on the sentiment of religion. It was opposed to any special treatment of Muslim countries and denounced the idea of Pan-Islamism.

#### THE ACTION GROUP (AG)

The Action Group came into being on 26th March, 1951 at Ibadan as a specifically "Western Regional Political Organisation" under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The aims of the party were, among others:

- i. To provide a regional political force to participate actively in the nationalist ferment and to be able to hasten the march to self-government in Nigeria.<sup>21</sup>
- ii. To counter the growing influence of Azikiwe and the NCNC in the Western Region<sup>22</sup> in order to pave the way for political ascendancy of the elite in that region.<sup>23</sup>
- iii. To weld together the sixteen divisions of Yorubaland to form a strongly organised unity so that it might be difficult for other tribes to break through them.<sup>24</sup>

The Action Group from its inception was determined "to win popular mass following in the West" and to control the government in that region. To achieve this goal, leaders of AG decided, as a matter of strategy to enlist popular support in Yorubaland, to declare the Action Group a "political wing" of the Yoruba cultural

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21. Awo, The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 219. Also, see Coleman, J.S., op. cit., p. 350.

22. Akinyemi, A.B., op. cit., p. 21.

23. Coleman, J.C., op. cit., pp. 350-351.

24. Sklar, op. cit., p. 104.

society known as "Egbe Omo Oduduwa". This strategy was necessary too, to avoid conflict with the traditional rulers who otherwise could have thought that the party's existence would be inimical to their positions.

From this regional base the party hoped to expand into a national force. From 1951 to the end of Nigeria's first Republic, the Action Group was the dominant party in the Western Region and controlled the government of that region. In addition, in 1960 it became the official opposition party in the federal legislature. It was, therefore, one of the tripods of Nigeria's federation. The Action Group had its own views on what Nigerian foreign policy should be. Unless these views coincide with those of the ruling party, otherwise, whatever policy position adopted would be subjected to severe criticism, a situation that would make policy-makers adopt a conscious, sometimes slow approach to policy decision. However, foreign policy was not a major concern of the AG until 1959 because it had to devote much of its time to mobilise support internally and design strategies to contest the appeal of the older national political parties that had more nationwide followers. Apart from its opposition to colonialism as a foreign instrument of exploitation, other statements bordering on external policy were those of a faction of the party described by Akinyemi as "the Left".<sup>25</sup> He, however, acknowledged that those were not the official position of the AG. It was at the 1959 federal elections that the Action Group officially advocated some foreign policy positions for Nigeria, as follows:

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25. Akinyemi, A.B., op. cit., p. 26.



i. To eradicate colonialism.

ii. To encourage regional integration in Africa. The AG advocated a political union of West African states as an alternative to Pan-Africanism.

It must be observed that while the AG opposed Pan-Africanism as being impracticable, it advocated "co-operation with black Africans and those nationals of Africa whatever the colour of their skin who believe in the absolute equality of all races".<sup>26</sup>

The AG also denounced the idea of Pan-Islamism or any special relations with the Arab countries of North Africa, both as a matter of opposition to the ruling NPC government and the fact that Nigeria's foreign policy should not be determined by religious sentiments.

iii. To accede to membership of the Commonwealth.

iv. To adopt a policy of alignment with any of the power blocs. The AG condemned "non-alignment" as being "disreputable and dangerous" and "a sign of an inferiority complex" but vacillated between alignment with the western and eastern blocs. At the 1959 federal elections, the Action Group advocated that Nigeria should align itself with the western bloc or "Western Democracies".<sup>27</sup> Then in 1961 the party opposed vehemently the proposal for Anglo-Nigerian military alliance.

v. Finally, the Action Group urged that Nigeria should maintain cordial relations with all nations of the world and seek to promote peaceful co-existence between the Western and Eastern blocs.<sup>28</sup>

#### LOOKING AT THE PROBLEMS

While the earliest Nigerian political parties emerged between 1922 and 1944 out of a common feeling and desire to arouse national consciousness and nationalist movement against British imperialism and colonialism, the later ones came into being

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26. Awo: The autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, op. cit., pp. 312-313.

27. Ibid., p. 310. See also Akinyemi, op. cit., pp. 28, 151. In Awolowo, Obafemi, The Peoples Republic. Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1968, p. 337. It advocated the external policy of 'world socialism'.

28. Awo: The autobiography, op. cit., p. 313.

as a result of dissatisfaction with the performance of the existing parties,<sup>29</sup> regional nationalism<sup>30</sup> and perhaps personal ambition. These gave rise to another set of problems in addition to those arising from the political amalgamation of diverse nationalities and those emanating from the regional imbalance in the Nigerian political structure. The third set of problems arose from the proliferation of political parties along ethnic lines and without generally accepted definite rules of the game. The method of operation and differences between political parties gave rise to sharp conflict, competition and rivalry among them. For example, in 1959 elections the NPC won in the northern region and also won a majority of the seats in the federal legislature. The NCNC won in the east while the AG won in the western region.<sup>31</sup> The parties that failed to win their desired majority in the Federal House accused the NPC of rigging the election. The same situation repeated itself in 1964. Each time the level of self-delusion and disappointment matched that of bitterness and hostility. Little did the losers at the elections realise that, given the population of northern Nigeria, its religious loyalties and cultural conservatism, the popular party in that

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29. Ibid., pp. 216-217. Explaining why the Action Group was formed, Chief Awolowo said there was no political party in existence dedicated to operating in the manner he wished, i.e. "with the utmost despatch". According to Awo, the NNDP was for all practical purposes a Lagos organisation and was not therefore suitable for the end in view. The NCNC was not sufficiently organised to present an effective programme. As for the NYM, its activities and following, like those of the NCNC were confined to urban areas and the working class only.

30. Coleman, J.S., op. cit., p. 351.

31. Claude S. Philips, op. cit., p. 23.

region would win the majority in the elections. The outcome of the elections and the attitude of political parties heightened disagreement and rivalry in Nigerian political life. The parties proceeded to harness the differences in attitude, religion and culture which prevailed in their respective regions and used them for political mobilisation aimed at maximising regional support for the party. The outcome was the bolstering of regional and ethnic nationalism which sometimes worked at cross-purposes with both the other regions and the federal government.

A fourth set of problems that confronted the Federation were those arising from inherent weaknesses and operational faults of the federal constitution. Events during the period (1960-1966) pointed to the fact that the regional governments assumed more power than a modest constitution would permit. The obvious implication was that the federal government became weak and the Federation became loose. The regional governments remained undeterred to the extent that some of them tried to project their party policies on matters within the exclusive schedule of the federal government, notably external affairs. For example, all the regional governments had offices (approximate to the status of a diplomatic consulate) in Britain and the United States, in addition to the federal government's High Commission or Embassy in these countries. The northern region had regional offices in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, while the western region planned a liaison office in Ghana. Reference could also be made to the foreign policy statements of the regional Premiers of the north, east and west. Contrary to the official stand of the federal



government at that time on the proposal for a Pan-Islamic solidarity with the Arab States, the leader of the NPC and Premier of the northern region, Sir Ahmadu Bello continued in accordance with his party's policy to involve Nigeria in the politics of the Arab States. He went on tour of some Muslim states in the Middle East and Asia during which he called for a summit conference of all Muslim states.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Dr. M.I. Okpara, the Premier of the east, and Chief S.L. Akintola, the Premier of the west, became partisans in the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>33</sup> Both visited Israel in 1961 and 1962 respectively and declared the support of their regional governments for Israel, notwithstanding that foreign policy was and still is the exclusive responsibility of the federal government.

It is clear from the foregoing that between 1960 and 1966 the federal government headed by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was confronted with numerous problems arising from the "administrative individuality of the former separate territories"<sup>34</sup> that were amalgamated, the faulty regional structure, the loose federal system of government, rivalry among political parties, and the election crisis in the Western Region in which hundreds of people were killed and properties destroyed, leading to a state of emergency there. These problems were quite substantial and threatened the persistence of the Nigerian political system. The consequence was the overthrow of the first Republic in a military coup leading to thirteen years of military rule in Nigeria.

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32. Akinyemi, op. cit, p. 101.

33. Ibid., p. 104.

34. Coleman, J.A., op. cit., p. 45.

### MILITARY RULE

#### THE GOVERNMENT UNDER AGUIYI-IRONSI (January 15-July 29, 1966)

The coup,<sup>35</sup> planned and executed by a group of army officers - mainly Majors in rank with a majority being of Ibo origin - led to the appointment of the most senior army officer, Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi as Head of State. Ironsi's regime became a victim of the forces of regionalism and was short-lived, being overthrown in July 1966 by army officers of northern Nigerian origin. However several of the regime's actions have lasting significance. It established the main organs of the subsequent military governments: the Supreme Military Council, drawn from the senior military officers, and the Federal Executive Council, designed to establish links with civilians, and including mainly civilian members, notably the federal Commissioners.

Ironsi's regime saw its immediate and main political task as restoring political order and national unity. It attempted to secure these goals by constitutional reforms - the creation of a unitary state, including a single police force, judicial system and civil service. These reforms were interpreted as threatening Northern domination of Nigeria, by many northern officers,<sup>36</sup> already aggrieved by the deaths of the Sardauna and

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35. For a participant account of the first military coup, see Ademoyega, Adewale, Why We Struck: the story of the first Nigerian Coup, Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited, 1981, and Gbulie, Ben, Nigeria's Five Majors - Coup d'Etat of 15th January, 1966. First Inside Account, African Educational Publishers (Nig.) Ltd., Onitsha, Nigeria, 1981.

36. Panter Brick, S.K. (ed.), Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War. University of London. The Athlone Press, 1970, p. 26. Also Valerie P. Bennett and Kirk-Greene, A.H.M., "Back to the Barracks: A Decade of Marking Time" in Panter Brick, Keith (ed.), Soldiers and Oil: The Political Transformation of Nigeria. Frank Cass and Company Ltd., London, 1978, p. 15.

Balewa in the 15th January coup. Consequently anti-Ibo rioting occurred during May and June (1966) in the north, and late in July a group of northern officers (including Murtala Muhammed and Yakubu Danjuma) overthrew the first military government and General Aguiyi-Ironsi was killed, as well as many hundreds of Ibo civilians.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of these circumstances, General Ironsi made significant contributions to Nigeria's foreign policy. He gave Nigeria "one voice" in its external affairs - an achievement that eluded the country in the first Republic. General Ironsi also abolished the establishment of regional offices abroad. This enhanced the status of Nigeria's diplomatic missions and symbolised a unity of purpose in foreign policy. It is also remarkable that the first reorganisation exercise of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since Nigeria achieved independence in 1960 was done in June 1966 on the orders of General Ironsi.<sup>38</sup> He summoned a meeting in Lagos of Nigeria's principal representatives for a comprehensive review

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37. Panter Brick, S.K. (ed.), Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War, op. cit, p. 24. Akinyemi, A.B. has indicated that northern opposition to the Ironsi Administration was not a question of not accepting a southerner (or an Ibo for that matter) as the Head of State, but a continuation of the resistance to any form of division of the north into autonomous provinces. Such a division would "endanger the north" which the elite believed was a "monolithic whole" from where they derived substantial political and economic advantages vis-a-vis other regions of Nigeria. See Nigerian Opinion, Magazine of the Nigerian Current Affairs Society, vol. 8, nos 1 & 2 (no date given), p. 14.

38. Stremmler, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1977, p. 3.



of the country's foreign policy. It was at this conference of Nigeria's Ambassadors that the national interests of the country were reviewed and its African policy re-evaluated and given definite import.

In February 1966 the government of General Ironsi protested to the U.S. government for allowing the rebel regime of Ian Smith to open an information office in Washington. Ironsi urged the U.S. government not to collaborate with the Smith regime and made it clear that his government's attitude to Western powers would be largely influenced by their relationship with South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal.<sup>39</sup> In May 1966 General Ironsi declared the Portuguese and white South Africans prohibited immigrants, and banned entry into Nigerian ports and airfields of Portuguese and South African ships and aircraft.<sup>40</sup>

Finally the government introduced a broader dimension to Nigeria's external economic policy by establishing a trade association between Nigeria and the European Economic Community, a matter on which the Balewa government had dragged its feet at a time when Britain was not a member of the Market. The Agreement was signed in Lagos and expected to boost Nigeria's trade with the EEC through extension of the Common Market's external tariff to cover some of Nigeria's major exports and imports. Though the Agreement allowed only a few of Nigeria's exports - oil, tin, timber etc. to enter the Common Market duty free as against twenty-six Common Market industrial exports to Nigeria<sup>41</sup> yet it represented a significant step in Nigeria's external economic policy.

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39. Aluko, O. (ed.), The Foreign Policies of African States, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977, p.

40. Ibid.

41. West Africa, no. 2563 of 16 July 1966, p. 789.

## THE GOVERNMENT UNDER YAKUBU GOWON (August 1966-July 1975)

Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon assumed office as Head of State on August 1, 1967, after three days of uncertainty and vacuum in the national leadership. Gowon faced immediate problems of establishing his authority within the army and the state. First, as a non-Muslim, there was obvious difficulty in making his leadership acceptable to the predominantly conservative Muslims of the far north, that were his erstwhile rulers. Second, as a relatively junior officer (e.g. to Brigadier Ogundipe) who had emerged from what was seen as a coup against an Igbo-led government, it was difficult to make himself acceptable to his (especially senior) colleagues in the military. Gowon's appointment was thus met with reserve or hostility among some northern and southern military officers and political leaders. Gowon dealt with this pragmatically, trying to balance concessions between competing regional pressures, and relying on a relatively secure base among Middle-Belt Officers and rank-and-file within the army. While it proved convenient to come to terms with northern demands and to placate the westerners by releasing from prison the Action Group leader Chief Awolowo and other popular politicians who had been in jail since 1963 on charges of treasonable felony, the demands from the east were not satisfied.

This was symbolised in the failure of delegates to the September 1966 constitutional conferences to reach agreement on the future structure of Nigeria, beyond that it would not be a unitary state. But what made agreement impossible was the renewed series of murderous attacks on Igboes in the north that followed the conference

and the resultant alienation and then secession of Eastern Region from the federation as 'Biafra'. From July 1967 to January 1970 there was civil war, ending in the reunification of Nigeria.

Shortly before the civil war, and to some degree taking advantage of it, Gowon was able to restructure the Federation, replacing the four regions by twelve states, and thereby dividing the north into six parts. However, he played on divisions within the northern elite, especially between regional and local politicians and between older and younger generations. In so doing, Gowon used his military backing too. According to Akinyemi "at the first constituent Assembly meeting in 1967, the northern delegation opposed the creation of states and demanded confederalism. It took the intervention of Middle Belt military officers to force the northern delegation to change its position".<sup>42</sup>

According to Panter Brick: "Just as the country had earlier been surprised by Ironsi's abolition of the regions in favour of unitary government, so was it again a year later, almost to the day, by Gowon's division of Nigeria into 12 states in place of the Regions".<sup>43</sup> Though the decision was unilateral, the division was not entirely arbitrary and was said to be provisional. Again haunted by the fear of giving the impression of regional or tribal domination, Gowon like Ironsi, appointed a military governor from each state to form the government in collaboration with civilian appointees in that state. Even in the Ibo heartland of the

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42. Nigerian Opinion: Magazine of the Nigerian Current Affairs Society, vol. 8, nos. 1 and 2, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

43. Panter Brick, Keith (ed.), Soldiers and Oil: The Political Transformation of Nigeria. Frank Cass, London, 1978, p. 18.



secessionist eastern region, then carved out as East-Central State, an Ibo civilian (in the absence of a senior Ibo military officer supporting the Gowon government) was appointed the Administrator of the State.

An account of the Nigerian government under Gowon would be incomplete without a brief mention of the 1970 programme for the return of the country to civilian rule. When Gowon took over the government in 1966, he promised to hand over to a constitutionally elected government in 1969, the date set by Ironsi. The civil war made that date impossible, but by October 1970, Gowon declared 1976 as the new target date for civilian rule. He also listed a number of activities which the military government was to complete before that date. These included the National Development Plan covering 1970-74, aimed at laying the foundations for self-financed development and reconstruction of war damages; the reorganisation of the armed forces after the civil war; conducting a population census; creation of new states; establishing a new revenue allocation formula; provision of a new constitution and the organisation of elections. It was and has been difficult to estimate the extent to which the programme was implemented. However, it was evident that Gowon was unable to carry out any reorganisation of the Army. Like the civilian government before it, the military failed to provide acceptable population figures for Nigeria. The failure of the 1973 census was a clear symptom of the endemic political illness of the country - namely "the centrifugal pull of rampant ethnicity" of the kind which brought down the First Republic.<sup>44</sup> The Gowon government neither created

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44. Ibid, p.21.

the new states nor took any discernible step to that effect. Corruption in public places became rampant. Towards the end of 1974, expectations gave way to disappointment and to disillusionment. The outcome of these was the frequent demands for the military to lift the ban on political activities and to return to barracks. Gowon ignored the demands and was removed with his state governors from office in July 1975.

Foreign policy under Gowon may be classified into two phases. The first was the wartime policy of (a) containment of Biafra's penetration into the international system; and (b) securing international political support for Nigeria. The second phase was the post war policy of (a) promoting regional solidarity through maintaining closer economic and political ties with the countries in the West African region and the formation of the Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS; and (b) maintaining a good international political stature for Nigeria. Usually when a country is engaged in war, it receives more international publicity and attention, but the end of the war and its outcome do not only affect the country's prestige and national honour, they also influence future policy. As in the Nigerian case, the lessons of the civil war diplomacy were believed to have had a substantial effect on Nigeria's post war foreign policy especially under Gowon. It reinforced the need for a more purposeful regional and continental policy, which though had been accepted principles of the Balewa and Ironsi governments.

#### THE GOVERNMENT UNDER MURTALA MUHAMMED (July 29, 1975 to February 13, 1976)

The announcement of the third military coup in Nigeria was received with a mixed feeling of welcome and scepticism among Nigerians

of varied walks of life. To many Nigerians the coup was welcomed not out of a preference of another military officer in place of Gowon but of a desire to be rid of the State Governors/Administrator, as well as some Federal and State Commissioners who had not only overstayed their welcome but had also become insensitive, arrogant and corrupt. Secondly, there were many other Nigerians who were worried that the interjection of another set of military rulers meant a prolongation of the regime that had failed like the first Republic before it. There were yet another group of Nigerians (mainly from the Middle Belt, Eastern and Western zones) who saw the emergence of Brigadier Murtala Muhammed as Nigeria's Head of State to represent the eventual success by the Hausa/Fulani Muslims of the far north in their bid since 1966 to regain political control of the country.<sup>45</sup>

There is some support for this in the regional bias shown in appointments to the existing main organs of government - the SMC and FEC, and to state governorships. Muhammed, unlike his predecessors, appointed only northerners and westerners to the posts,<sup>46</sup>

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45. Despite being a close relation of Alhaji Inuwa Wada - a former federal Minister of Defence and Treasurer of the NPC, Muhammed was "the most aggressive of the northern army hawks ... who was the NPC's instrument among the military" and "the spokesman for northern officers in 1966 at meetings of officers and civilians of Northern origin regularly called at Lugard Hall for the dual plan of revenge upon the East by the North and a break up of the country". See Ruth First, The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London, 1970, pp. 313-319. West Africa, no. 3032 of 4th August 1975, p. 887. Obasanjo, Olusegun, My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, Heinemann, Ibadan, 1980, pp. 6-9.

46. With the exception of Lt. Commander Godwin Kanu, all twenty-two members of SMC were from the North and West. Governors of then three Eastern states were also from the North and West. See Muhammed Murtala, A Time for Action: Collected Speeches of His Excellency General Murtala Muhammed, Department of Information, Lagos, 1980, pp. 3-5.



as he did with the National Council of States, a new organ.

Far more significant, however, in forming popular attitudes to the new regime was the swiftness and range of its early actions. Some issues which lay behind Gowon's declining popularity were confronted: the 'new states' issue, the termination of military rule, the question of a new capital and accountability. Panels on the creation of new states and a new capital were set up within a month, and within six months their reports had been made. The government acted on them through the establishment of seven new states (with majority in the north) in addition to the existing twelve and the decision to transfer the federal capital to Abuja in the north. Both decisions reflected also some regional bias, which resulted in again tilting the geo-political balance in Nigeria with longer term de-stabilising effect on succeeding regimes.

Other significant actions were the setting up of a Panel to draft a new constitution - implying that civilian rule would be restored, and of investigative bodies concerned with corruption, and administrative injustices (i.e. the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and the Public Complaints Commission). These were appreciable innovations of that government.

The regime's foreign policy showed similar dramatic element, though on a single issue, namely Angola. Muhammed rejected both the OAU stand on a government of national unity in Angola and the USA's attempt to influence his government's position on the civil war in Angola; describing the U.S. role in Southern Africa as "unedifying",<sup>47</sup> he chose to recognize the MPLA Government in Angola, an action of considerable importance to the MPLA.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Ibid., p. 55.

48. For details, see below, chapter 8-ii:b.

The tempo and dynamism that characterised government actions during the six months of Murtala Muhammed's rule overshadowed both the lapses of the administration and internal problems within the army, especially over the threat of substantial demobilisation and the injustice of the "General's" promotion at a time of promotion blockages for middle rank officers. These factors contributed towards the attempted coup of February 1976, in which Murtala Muhammed was killed. Once the attempt was suppressed, the next most senior officer, Lt. General Obasanjo became Head of State - the first Yoruba to occupy the position since independence.

#### GOVERNMENT UNDER OLUSEGUN OBASANJO (Feb. 1976-Sept. 1979)

General Obasanjo assumed office with a consciousness of the perennial factor of regional rivalry in Nigeria, as shown by the northern origin of the bulk of the conspirators against Ironsi, a southerner, as well as by the Middle Belt/Southern Zaria origins of the conspirators against Muhammed. He was therefore determined to placate northern fear by appointing several officers to posts<sup>49</sup> albeit with Yoruba 'assistants' to monitor activities and exert necessary influence on major issues.

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49. Lt. Colonel Yar' Adua, from the far north and a Muslim, who for instance was a subordinate officer to Colonel Joe Garba in the Brigade of Guards, was appointed the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters (second in command to the Head of State). Other relatively junior officers from the far north and a few others from the Middle Belt described by Ian Campbell as "graduates of Bida Middle School" were promoted to top positions in the Army - like Adjutant-General, Director of Military Intelligence, Commander of Lagos Army Garrison and Commander of the Brigade of Guards etc. See Ian Campbell, "Army Re-organisation and Military Withdrawal" in Panter-Brick (ed.), op. cit., p. 89.



Obasanjo assiduously cultivated regional support by allocating the spending of Nigeria's massive oil revenues to balance regional gains and losses for the north and west. Thus, despite the moving of the capital to Abuja, there were more visible federal investments in Lagos than perhaps in the entire nine previous years of military government.<sup>50</sup> Continuity with the Murtala regime was stressed, and symbolised in the joint displaying of Murtala's portrait with that of Obasanjo's in public buildings for 24 of the 42½ months of the latter's leadership.

Discontent, however, crept in and tensions began to rise with the rumours of high level corruption. It became known that the "politicians in military uniform" were making unscheduled overseas trips and on each trip they would go personally to collect travel allowances plus the amount supposedly to be used for the stated objectives of the trip.<sup>51</sup> Top military officers became involved in the award of government contracts which in many cases attracted kick-backs. For instance, sources close to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) revealed that decisions about the sale of the country's crude oil to any agent were made at the

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50. Examples of the military regime's acts motivated by tribalism and regionalism include the location in Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna and Kano of FESTAC infra-structures costing several millions in Naira; the building of NET in Kano, Lagos, and Abeokuta; the reconstruction of federal roads, building of highways and fly-overs. There are other examples of imbalance in the distribution of amenities like siting steel industries in Katsina, Jos, Ajaokuta, Oshogbo and Aladja in Warri; building agricultural projects like dams and irrigation schemes mainly in the north; establishing in Kaduna the country's biggest refinery made up of two plants, one for regular or light crude and the other for heavy crude, and another refinery in Warri. The military regime also built a petrochemical industry in Kaduna and Warri. The neglect of the Eastern states - secessionist Biafra - by the military regime was seen as a policy of economic reprisals.

51. From interview with some staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria.



the "top level of government" and that the Company was merely carrying out directives. Rumours of improper dealings with Nigeria's crude oil sales were rife.

At the beginning of the second quarter of 1978 the government decided that soldiers holding certain political offices would be expected to retire from the Armed Forces after the hand-over to civilians. It asked those who wished to continue in military service to relinquish their political posts for others who would be retiring thereafter. This was seen as an attempt by the top military rulers to offer other senior military officers the opportunity to have a share of the national cake. This might not have been the intention, but every Minister and Governor or Administrator in office usually ended up getting richer than before.

There were rumours of coup attempts in 1978 and 1979, the last occurring in early September when post-election petitions against irregularities were pending in the courts. The coup attempts were quietly suppressed and Obasanjo cautiously paddled through the leadership of the military government. Like his predecessors, it was difficult for Obasanjo to depoliticise the Army through reorganisation and demobilisation. A number of barracks were built under the Obasanjo administration for housing the soldiers but beyond that, other necessary considerations of discipline, deployment and effectiveness were neglected. Most of those who had been associated with previous coups like Babangida and Buhari etc. and those who had tasted power during the thirteen years of military rule like the former Military Governors/Administrators and Commissioners as well as those

brought into the army by political patrons to represent regional or ethnic character and interest, were allowed to remain in uniform. In effect, Obasanjo sent the soldiers back to the barracks, but without a carefully planned programme of activity to engage them with. A large and politicised army, full of expectations and unengaged, would no doubt constitute a threat to political stability.

It is to General Obasanjo's credit that he worked assiduously to implement the programme for the return of government to civilians on 1st October, 1979; the date proposed by Murtala Muhammed. Under Obasanjo, local government was reformed (1976) despite objections from the northern ruling families, and a Constituent Assembly of 200 members, all but 10% elected, was convened in 1977. The Assembly spent a year discussing and amending the draft constitution. Once its task was completed, the ban on political parties was lifted, leading to a period of intense organisational activity.

There were over 89 political associations but only 5 parties qualified for registration by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). These were (1) the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari (2) the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo (3) the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) led by Dr. Nnamdi Awikiwe (4) the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) led by Mallam Aminu Kano and (5) the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) headed by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. In a keenly contested election, the NPN won in seven states, the UPN in five, the NPP in three, while the PRP and GNPP had two states each. The electoral decree stipulated that a candidate shall be deemed

to have been duly elected President if "he has the highest number of votes cast at the election; and ... not less than one quarter of the votes cast at the election in each of at least two third of all the states in the Federation".<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile the NPN Presidential candidate Alhaji Shehu Shagari scored "the highest number of votes cast at the election" and not less than one quarter of the votes in 12 out of 19 states. His votes in the 13th state was disputed as less than one quarter. FEDECO decided "in the absence of any legal advice"<sup>53</sup> to assume that only  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 25% was required in the 13th state, and therefore declared Alhaji Shehu Shagari to have been duly elected President of the second Republic of Nigeria. The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Awolowo who had the second highest number of votes at the election but mainly from his Yoruba tribal group and the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, who had the least votes at the election but secured "a majority of votes in the highest number of states" sued FEDECO in court challenging the declaration. The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the FEDECO and on October 1, 1979 General Obasanjo ended the 13 years of military rule and ceremoniously handed over the mantle of office to Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

Foreign policy under the Obasanjo government acquired additional tempo and dynamism. The government hosted high level international conferences like the "First World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture - FESTAC", the World Conference for Action against apartheid and ECOWAS Heads of State Summit etc.

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52. Federal Electoral Decree (FEDECO), 1979.

53. FEDECO announcement of the result of the Presidential election, August 1979.



By far the most significant actions of that government in external affairs were in Zimbabwe and Chad. Through 'nationalisation' of the assets of British Petroleum in Nigeria, it compelled the Thatcher Administration in London to reverse its proposed recognition of and support for the minority racist government in Zimbabwe. General Obasanjo's government also took a bold initiative to mediate between the warring factions in Chad and to send Nigerian peace-keeping force there to manage the crisis and preserve peace.

#### GOVERNMENT UNDER SHEHU SHAGARI (Oct. 1979-Dec. 1983)

The government under Alhaji Shehu Shagari was constitutionally elected. It was essentially a presidential form of government, unlike the parliamentary type in Nigeria's first Republic. The President was an executive one, unlike the first Republic President without executive powers. There were two legislative houses: Senate and House of Representatives, commonly called the National Assembly. Each state in the federation, like the regions in the first Republic, had a legislature known as the 'State Assembly'. There was absence of institutionalised opposition and leaders of the parties were not automatically members of the legislature. Parliamentary debates were not a means of scoring points against the government but as an opportunity to make constructive contribution to the national political process.

The principal executive organs of the government were provided by the Constitution (1979) which also provided for strict adherence to 'federal character' in appointments into the bodies. Thus Shagari's government was fairly representative, including many

outstanding political figures in Nigeria. It started with a marriage of convenience with NPP which lasted for two years, and helped the government to overcome the initial obstacles arising from a 'team-up' of the other parties against NPN in protest of FEDECO's interpretation of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 19 states.

The main programme of the Shagari government was to effect early transfer of the federal government to Abuja, the new capital city. Shagari had in fact promised his northern supporters to start conducting government business from there from October 1982. To achieve this, many development projects were neglected and Nigeria's huge revenues from oil were diverted to Abuja for the provision of offices, residential accommodation, infra-structures and social facilities etc. This resulted in the growth of a large number of 'Abuja contractors', 'sub-contractors' and 'contract agents' ostensibly to help complete in three years the building of the federal capital originally earmarked to be completed in fifteen years.<sup>54</sup> The government unwittingly poured more money into circulation and encouraged excessive importation of materials and equipment especially in connection with Abuja. Both of these actions resulted in very high inflation in Nigeria and exhaustion of its foreign reserves.<sup>55</sup> By early 1982 Abuja became known as

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54. The rush to transfer the capital was motivated by the regionalism that lay behind Murtala Muhammed's decision to move it to the northern heartland despite popular suggestions for a geo-political centre as evidenced in the reluctance to commence work there from 1976, when the decree establishing Abuja was promulgated, to 1980 when actual work started. It was feared that another President after Shagari might reverse the decision.

55. In December 1980 the external reserve was N.5.5 billion but by December 1983 it fell to N.885.2 million - barely sufficient to finance one month's import bill.

"a child of waste and corruption".<sup>56</sup> It is not yet known the amount of money spent each year on Abuja between 1980 and 1983 but according to Mohammed Haruna over N.1 billion was spent in the first half of 1982, much of it for goods not delivered or jobs not done. Nigeria was plunged into economic crisis.<sup>57</sup> The cause of this was obvious; the undue haste to move to Abuja.

This economic condition was aggravated by the oil glut in the world market since 1982. Nigeria's crude oil export dropped substantially and the total revenue collected by the Federal Government also fell from N.14,745.7 million in 1981 to N.11,748.8 million (1982) and N.10,947.4 million (1983). Although the Shagari government had a programme of 'Green Revolution', agriculture was neglected. Industrial output declined and no investment in new industries was made. Unemployment was very high with the attendant social problems. There was obvious discontent. At the elections in August 1983, it was hoped that the NPN government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari would be changed but it was re-elected, perhaps due to malpractices at the election. On 31 December 1983, the government was overthrown in a military coup.

#### POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA'S SECOND REPUBLIC

The five registered parties were to some extent different from the political parties of the first Republic. They were broad

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56. Haruna, Mohammed, "Abuja: a capital in waiting" in West Africa, No. 3554 of 7 October, 1985, pp. 2089-2090.

57. The internal public debt of the Federal Government increased very sharply to N14.8 billion (1982) and N22.2 billion (1983) while the external debt of the government also increased from N4.8 billion in 1982 to N5.4 billion in 1983, both in comparison with the total public debt of N9,785.3 million at the end of 1980. See Central Bank of Nigeria, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, December 1981-83, pp. 2-3.



based national parties, as was evident in their names, objectives, emblems, motto and in the fact that each party's headquarters were located in the federal capital of Nigeria. Each had to reflect the federal character of Nigeria in its membership, structure and organisation.<sup>58</sup> Membership of each party was open to every Nigerian citizen. Every party had membership from all the states of the Federation, their governing bodies consisted of persons drawn from at least two thirds of the states, and they had registered offices in at least 13 of the 19 states.

However, leading members of the political parties in the first Republic re-appeared to become leaders of the parties in Nigeria's second Republic. For example, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, former leader of the NCNC in the first Republic became the presidential candidate of the NPP in the second Republic. Chief Abafemi Awolowo, leader of the Action Group (first Republic) became leader and Presidential candidate of the UPN in the second Republic. Malam Aminu Kano leader of the NEPU (first Republic) became Presidential candidate of PRP in the second Republic. Alhaji Shehu Shagari, NPC Federal Minister (first Republic) became the Presidential candidate of NPN in the second Republic, while Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim also an NPC Federal Minister (first Republic) became leader and Presidential candidate of the GNPP in the second Republic. These men (popularly referred to in Nigerian politics as "the old brigade politicians") were the dominant personalities in Nigerian politics during the second Republic. Their involvement and leadership tended to give the impression that nothing has changed in Nigerian politics after 13 years of military rule. This impression was reinforced by

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58. Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette. Decree No. 73 - Electoral Decree 1977, Lagos, December 29, 1977, pp. A 349-A 352.

- (1) the cut-throat competition for electoral victory in both 1979 and 1983;
- (2) bribing of the electorate;
- (3) rigging at the polls and;
- (4) hostile relationships between losers and winners at the elections, just as in the first Republic.

The extent to which the activities of these parties helped to undermine the government in the second Republic is yet to be determined. Corruption was rampant especially among members of the ruling National Party of Nigeria and has been known to be one of the major factors that led to the demise of that regime.<sup>59</sup>

Political parties in the second Republic accepted the foreign policy of the country as inherited from the military regime but differed in emphasis as follows:

The GNPP declared that it would reinforce the dynamic foreign policy of the previous military government and stressed that:

1. It would pursue a policy of strict non-alignment;
2. it would be committed to fight racism and other forms of discrimination; and
3. its foreign policy would be guided by Nigeria's own declared interests in the world.

There is apparent similarity between the party's options and the existing foreign policy of Nigeria. Perhaps the difference was in emphasis rather than substance.

The NPN declared that its foreign policy would be to ensure the following:

1. The protection and defence of Nigeria's independence and territorial integrity;
2. the defence, preservation and promotion of our ways of life, especially our democratic values and our cultures;
3. the enhancement of Nigeria's image and status in other countries especially in Africa;

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59. Daily Times, National Concord, The Punch - various issues, January 1984.

4. the promotion of ECOWAS and adherence to the Charters of the OAU and the United Nations;
5. the pursuit of an independent foreign policy and cordial relations with all friendly countries; and
6. the promotion of world peace through international co-operation and understanding.

These options, while more elaborate than those of the GNPP are again essentially similar to the foreign policy objectives of Nigeria as declared by General Obasanjo on 29 June 1976.<sup>60</sup>

In the conduct of foreign policy, the NPP said it would make the pursuit of Nigeria's declared interests a sine qua non. It declared that:

1. The consolidation of the independence of the already independent African States would be a priority;
2. the liberation of the African countries still under colonial and apartheid regime must be pursued with great vigour;
3. Pan-Africanism would be pursued most energetically;
4. Nigeria would continue its active role in ECOWAS, OAU, the Commonwealth and the United Nations Organisation.
5. it would uphold the policy of non-alignment.

The NPP, like the NPN, highlighted the prevailing foreign policy of Nigeria.

The foreign policy options of the PRP were by contrast more 'revolutionary' in tone than any other party's. Its "General Programme" observed that "Nigeria is in the process of far-reaching social transformation. Two great forces face each other and are locked in a grim struggle for survival and ascendancy. ... This constant and ever-deepening struggle between the forces of conservatism on the one hand and those of progress on the other is the prime moving force of contemporary Nigerian life. It is taking place

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60. Following the recommendations of the Adedaji Foreign Policy Review Panel, the Federal Military Government redefined the main objectives of the country's foreign policy.



in every facet of our national life". In foreign policy, the Party declared its commitment to continue with the foreign policy of the Military government and would place emphasis on:

1. The preservation of the independence and sovereignty of all African states. It stated that "imperialism makes use of reactionary African and Arab states to subvert radical and nationalist African states as well as prop up anti-populist and puppet African regimes". Therefore, "the defeat of imperialism in all its forms on the African Continent is a necessary condition for the victory of a people's regime in Nigeria".
2. The complete liberation of Africa from colonialism, white settlers minority rule, apartheid and neo-colonialism.
3. The political unity of Africa and the emancipation of the black man all over the world.
4. General disarmament.
5. The promotion of world peace.

Apart from couching its ideas in revolutionary terms reminiscent of the nationalist slogans in the pre-independence era, the Party's ideas were - once more - in line with the already existing foreign policy of Nigeria.

So also were the foreign policy preferences of the UPN:

1. to promote Nigeria's and Africa's interests in the world to the best advantage;
2. to carry forward the building of a virile Community of West African States;
3. to intensify Nigeria's moral and material contribution to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa;
4. to strengthen the Organisation of African Unity;
5. to maintain friendly relations with all friendly countries irrespective of political systems;
6. to support the United Nations.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, there were no major differences between the parties in their foreign policy preferences, unlike the first Republic when substantial differences existed between them. Also there were no differences between the parties position and that of the previous

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61. UP Nigeria; A Manifesto of the Unity Party of Nigeria, Lagos, December 1978.

government. In effect, all the political parties and their leaders endorsed the foreign policy of Nigeria as evolved over the years.

#### GOVERNMENT UNDER MUHAMMADU BUHARI (Jan. 1984-Aug. 1985)

Nigeria's return to military rule was welcomed with some enthusiasm in January 1984 with the hope of a change from the inept leadership and economic mismanagement of the previous Administration. The leaders of the coup - mainly Middle Belt and far north in origin and Brigadiers in rank - appointed Major General Muhammadu Buhari as Head of State, though he was neither the most senior army officer nor the most qualified in terms of formal educational qualification and experience in government, because he was likely to be accepted by the Northern ruling families with some stake in the ousted civilian government.

Buhari's regime professed to revive the Nigerian economy but started with mass sacking of public officers in order to reduce budget deficits. This action only worsened unemployment in the country, with several other economic and social implications. The government was also determined to achieve early transfer of the Federal Government to Abuja and continued to divert its meagre resources there. The economy continued to deteriorate. The level of oil production continued to fall from its peak of 2.3 million barrels per day in 1979 to the level of 1 million barrels per day in 1984. The average daily export of petroleum slumped from 2.1 million to 0.97 million barrels, and the export price fell from an average of \$37.77 per barrel in 1981 to \$30.35 per barrel in 1983 and \$29.71 per barrel in 1984/5.<sup>62</sup> To accumulate foreign exchange, the

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62. West Africa, No. 3559 of 11 November 1985, p. 2350.

government declared austerity measures and banned importation of several goods. It achieved some success in this but the deplorable economic condition within the country remained with the government. Many industries were shut down and workers laid off because of lack of equipment. There was an acute shortage of industrial products and inflation rose very high. The government did not invest in any new industrial project. It stressed the need to revive agriculture but spent more money in its propaganda programme: War Against Indiscipline - WAI.

Early in the administration, it had promulgated Decree No. 4 which sought to protect public officers against false accusations in the press. This was interpreted as interference with press freedom which is so much valued in Nigeria. There was the notorious Decree No. 2 which empowered the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters to detain for three months at the first instance, any one whose actions were considered by him to be against state security. Many citizens were detained under the two Decrees. Criticisms were suppressed. Students and Doctors' Associations were proscribed for opposing government measures and their leaders detained. Many politicians from the civilian Administration accused of corruption and abuse of office, were detained for 20 months without trial. These actions of the government offended Nigerians' sense of justice and disenchantment grew rapidly at every level up to the ruling Supreme Military Council where there was persistent friction about government actions.<sup>63</sup> On August 27, 1985, the government was overthrown in Nigeria's sixth military coup.

The regime's foreign policy was a bungle. This is shown in the "retirements with immediate effect" of many experienced and very

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63. Private briefing.



good External Affairs Officers, with a scandalous impression of job insecurity and consequent low morale among those not affected. After sacking some of the Ministry's best officers, the appointment of their successors influenced by regional bias, "were not always in the best interest of the service, which perhaps accounts for the incompetence and confusion of Nigeria's stand in several international meetings".<sup>64</sup> The other prominent fiascos were the Dikko kidnap affair; the unpatriotic campaign against Dr. Peter Onu of Nigeria - assistant Secretary-General of the OAU who stood a good chance of being elected the Secretary-General,<sup>65</sup> and the inadequate support for Professor Adebayo Adedeji, executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in an election to become the head of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).<sup>66</sup> Generally, with the exception of the support given to Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) though in less refined style, the Buhari regime's foreign policy performance fell below average in comparison with the policies of other Nigerian governments since 1960.

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64. West Africa, No. 3558, of 4 November, 1985, p. 2298.

65. At the OAU summit in July 1985, at Addis Ababa, several African leaders, e.g. President Kaunda, had approached the Buhari regime to allow them draft Dr. Peter Onu of Nigeria - assistant Secretary General - to become the Secretary General because they had been impressed by his performance in an acting capacity over two years. But Nigeria was supporting the Niger foreign minister for the post. External Affairs Minister, Dr. Ibrahim Gambari, spent his time in Addis Ababa campaigning against Dr. Onu. When many African countries insisted on drafting him, the Minister announced that Nigeria was recalling Dr. Onu from the OAU. The government had hoped to appoint another Nigerian to his post but were unaware that an officer of that seniority has to be elected. See West Africa, No. 3558 of 4 November, 1985, pp. 2298-9.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 2299.

**GOVERNMENT UNDER IBRAHIM BABANGIDA (August 1985 - ? )**

At present Nigeria has a new military government formed on August 28, 1985 and headed by Major-General Ibrahim Babangida - a northerner, who is known to be friendly and well connected with the major ethnic groups, and above all has concern for the common people in Nigeria. He possesses some experience in government having been a member of the Supreme Military Council since 1975. The indication so far is that he is resisting regional pressures and has declared the whole country as his government's constituency. This is reflected in his appointments into the main organs of government - Armed Forces Ruling Council - AFRC (formerly SMC), National Council of Ministers (formerly FEC) and State governorships. However, it is too early to assess the actions of the government. Having thus reviewed the political background of Nigeria, attempts will be made in the next sub-section to trace the origin and development of foreign policy in Nigeria.

## (iii) THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF FOREIGN POLICY IN NIGERIA

Foreign policy is a dynamic process and its origin cannot be pinned down to a particular period or event. As issues arise, new ideas generate about how to tackle them. At the same time positions are taken and corresponding responses are formulated. Each major issue makes its own impact on the policy machinery and sometimes tend to overshadow others before it. For example, the colonial period of Nigeria tends to overshadow the past long history and political life of the Nigerians. Hence many writers on Nigerian foreign policy have tended to take 1960 as their starting point. Yet foreign policy activity by 'Nigerians' dates back to the earliest times of the groups of people inhabiting the territory now called Nigeria. It therefore entered the world with an inherited set of diplomatic links, treaties and international relations, practices from its past political relationships.

The argument here is that foreign policy in its broad sense is a continuous process in the political life of a nation or a group of people. Indisputably every state whether traditional, colonial or sovereign has both internal and external environments. Activities in these environments have the tendency to affect directly or indirectly inter-state relations, which in turn elicit responses. Such responses may be in the form of co-operation and friendly relations or opposition and resistance or enmity and war toward another state or actor in the external environment. The activities involved may have economic, political, military, religious or cultural objectives but all may affect another state. These imply that every state at whatever stage has its external relationships and all states make foreign policy, which may be



latent or manifest depending on the predisposing circumstances of the state and the attitude of its elite. It therefore seems improper to limit the search for the roots of Nigerian foreign policy to events in the colonial or post independence period. A study of the evolution and development of Nigerian foreign policy requires examination of events, dating from the earliest times to the present, that have some bearing directly or indirectly on external relations. That would be a stimulating task for the diplomatic historian. For now, we will identify some of the sources from which Nigerian foreign policy has evolved and developed. These include:

1. Traditional diplomatic practices and techniques,
2. Inter-state relations in Africa,
3. Afro-European relations,
4. Nationalism and nationalist movements,
5. Independence and demands of statehood,
6. National economic necessities, and
7. The civil war.

We shall now try to show how the above-mentioned factors contributed to the emergence of Nigerian foreign policy.

#### TRADITIONAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICES AND TECHNIQUES

Before we assert the existence of traditional diplomatic practices and techniques in Nigeria and their relevance to external relations today, we would note the view of one of the most admired African historians, Professor Basil Davidson, a British author, who wrote that:

"Africans have a long history of their own. This African history is part of the history of the world. Nothing large or lasting in the general story of mankind can be fully understood without the African side of the story. ... Many imperialist historians of Africa, during the colonial period wrote bad history. Their prejudices and personal feelings made them write that Africans had no history of their own. It is part of the modern rebirth of Africa that we know this view to be entirely false".<sup>1</sup>

The above views, it is believed, help to support the point that Nigerians had made foreign policy and practised foreign relations in the pre-colonial period. What do we mean by traditional diplomatic practices and techniques and how relevant were they to foreign policy evolution? We can begin to answer the question by first stating that foreign policy primarily originates from those general principles of good sense and experience that prevail in all human societies and which govern the relations among themselves and between them and others in separate independent states. Such "general principles", "good sense" and "experience" which exist, with or without written conventions or treaties of universal or bilateral import, are referred to here as traditional diplomatic practices and techniques. Foreign relations and foreign policy, in the sense of the system of actions and interactions between one group of human beings and another group alien to themselves, have existed from the beginning of human societies. Thus, like its essential instrument - diplomacy - "it is neither the invention nor the pastime of some particular political system, but is an essential element in any relation between nation and nation or state and state".<sup>2</sup> There had existed such practices and techniques

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1. Davidson, Basil et al, The Growth of African Civilisation, History of West Africa 1000-1800, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1965, p. 1.

2. Nicolson, Harold (Sir), Diplomacy, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, pp. 4-6.

in the conduct of relations among and between the component states of "Nigeria". These practices and techniques have relevance to the general attitude of Nigerian elites toward external affairs.<sup>3</sup>

To illustrate the type of diplomatic practices and techniques used in the conduct of relations in traditional Nigeria, we could draw evidence from the translation of Arabic letters found in the House of the Waziri of Sokoto, Bohari, in 1903, regarding relations between the Fulani kingdom, the various states of Hausaland and the Bornu Empire. In a letter from Sarkin Gobir Ibrahim, 61st chief of the Gobirawa to the Sultan Sarkin Musulmi Abderrahman, calling for peace between Sokoto and Gobir, the chief wrote thus -

"From Sarkin Gobir Ibrahim, son of Sarkin Gobir Maiyaki to the Sarkin Musulmi Abderrahman, Greetings.

After greetings to inform you of what is between me and you. My desire is for the trust which was between me and thee before. May Allah bring peace and prosperity and increased friendship and love between us and you and permission for our people to pass between our kingdom and yours in peace and security without dispute. May you sit in the place of your fathers and prosper. That is what I say to you. Peace. May Allah grant your approval of this affairs of ours. We have seen our messenger Dan Kerre Kerre. Again may Allah cause goodwill between us and our countries".<sup>4</sup>

Another letter from Alhaji Aminu El Kanemi to the Fulani rulers in the reign of Sarkin Musulmi Shehu, also illustrates a high degree of rational diplomatic practice and method in pre-colonial Nigeria. This particular letter was an attempt to halt hostilities and to resolve problems through dialogue and negotiation. The letter read:

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3. Awolowo, Obafemi (Chief), The People's Republic. Oxford University Press, London, 1968, p. 329.

4. Blackwell, H.F., The occupation of Hausaland, 1900-1904. Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1969, p. 22. The date of the letter is not indicated.



"From Alhaji Aminu son of Mohamadu El Kanemi, to the Mallams and principal men of the Fulani, greetings and friendship.

After greetings the reason why I am sending this letter to you is that when the Will of God brought me to the land of Bornu, I found the fire of discord had broken out between you and the people of this land. I enquired the cause of this. Some persons informed me that oppression was the cause, others again that it was religion. We were therefore perplexed by this matter and I wrote a letter to your brethren who are my neighbours. I besought them to explain to me their reason and pretext for making war on Bornu. They sent me in reply a poor sort of answer; such as would not come from a wiseman, much less from a learned one and least of all from one who is reforming religion. They wrote me a list of titles of books and said that in these books they saw the reason of the war. Now we have examined these books and we do not see in them what they have seen. Thus we remained in our perplexity...

In truth we have heard news of the character of Shehu son of Usman son of Fodio and we have read his books. Your actions are at discord with what is in his books... I wish to inform you we are on Shehu's side if Shehu is for the truth. If he is departing from truth, then we leave him and follow the truth".<sup>5</sup>

These two examples shall suffice, although there are many other such letters worded like diplomatic "note verbale" and "Aide Memoirs" of today. The examples illustrate that general principles and practice of external relations had been evolved by generations of Nigerians and must have been carried from the early time to the present. Such ideas and patterns of behaviour may help to explain some of the attitudes and behaviour of present day Nigerian foreign policy elite.

#### INTER-STATE RELATIONS IN AFRICA

The contemporary foreign policy of Nigeria, like other African states, owes much to inter-African relations in both pre-colonial

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5. Muhammad Bello, Sultan of Sokoto, The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani 1837; Published in Kanō by Emirate Printing Department in 1922. Reproduced by E.J. Arnett. Source: National Union Catalogue pre-1956 Imprints, vol. 400, p. 495.

and modern times. We will discuss such relationship not simply to show that the foreign policy of modern African states has a history of its own but primarily to establish a correlation between the past and the present, as a possible guide towards understanding the country's African policy.

(a) Pre-Colonial Relations in Africa:

Relatively little is known about the conduct of relations other than trade relations among African states in pre-colonial times but recent studies in African diplomatic history reveal that before the advent of colonialism, the African ruling elite "carried on activities of a diplomatic nature in so many situations, in such a large variety of ways and at all periods of their history".<sup>6</sup> The studies indicate that traditional diplomatic practices and techniques were employed to resolve inter-state conflicts and to promote peaceful relations. Though detailed knowledge is not yet available on the specific issues of the external relations of these early state-systems and their diplomatic procedures, Professor J.F. Ade-Ajayi has argued that African experience of diplomatic activities in pre-colonial times has relevance to modern international relations in general and to inter-African relations in particular. He made reference to the relationship between the Benin Kingdom and the Ibo Republics in the east, and between Benin and Igala, Nupe and Yoruba Kingdoms. There were also similar relationships between the Oyo Empire and Dahomey on one hand and between Dahomey and Asante on the other.

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6. Ade-Ajayi, J.F., "Recent Studies in West African Diplomatic History", in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 1, no. 1 of July 1975, p. 40.



These and other similar relationships bear testimony to the existence among traditional African states of a measure of inter-state relations guided by diplomatic practices and techniques.<sup>7</sup>

The Kanem-Borno Empire by 1250 AD under the rulership of Mai Dunama Dabbalemi had established relations with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, and was known to have sent Ambassadors to these countries.<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hodgkin has examined in more detail the relations between Bornu and Egypt.<sup>9</sup> He made reference to the correspondence between the King of Bornu and the Sultan's court in Egypt. In one of the letters addressed to the ruler of Egypt, according to Hodgkin, the King of Bornu complained of the Judham Arabs (from neighbouring state of Bornu) who captured a group of Bornu people and sold them abroad - likely in Egypt or other Mediterranean countries. The king of Bornu therefore wrote and sent emissaries to the friendly kings of Egypt and Syria urging them to prohibit the sale of Bornu captives in their countries. The emissaries delivered the letter along with suitable gifts of mercury and other things.<sup>10</sup> A part of the letter read:

"After greetings we have sent you as ambassador my cousin, Idris Ibn Muhammad, because of the calamity we suffered. The Arabs who are called Judham and others have taken captive our free subjects - women and children and old people, and our relatives and other Muslims ... and are selling

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7. Ibid. Similar arguments are found in Ray Ofoegbu's Foundation Course in International Relations for African Universities. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1980, p. 25. See early inter-African trade relations in Onimode, Bade, Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria. Zed Press, London, 1982, p. 15; also in Fage, J.D, An Introduction to the history of West Africa, Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 9.

8. Onimode, Bade, op. cit., p. 19.

9. Hodgkin, Thomas, Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, London, 1975, pp. 102-104.

10. Ibid, p. 103.



them to the slave-dealers in Egypt and Syria and elsewhere, and some they keep for themselves.

Now God has placed in your hands the Government of Egypt, from the Mediterranean to Awan, ... send messengers to all your lands, to your Emirs, and your Wazirs, and your Qadis and your Governors, and your men of learning, and the heads of your markets, (that) when they have found our people, let them remove them from the hands of those who hold them captive, and ... release them, and let them return to their liberty and to Islam".<sup>11</sup>

The tone of this note confirms there was already an important friendly relationship between the two rulers. It also shows that the practise of foreign policy then was advanced and akin to contemporary foreign policy practices. There were, in fact, similar practices in the conduct of external relations between the "Hausa Bakwai" (the Seven Hausa states) and the Empires of Mali and Kanem-Bornu since the 16th century.<sup>12</sup> Professor Ade-Ajayi therefore seems justified in arguing that:

"It is clear from the general historical literature that most African states devised all the apparatus and procedures adequate for conducting negotiations for peace or war, negotiating trading conditions, arranging treaties and sealing them, and sometimes for conducting arbitrations and parleys. There were arrangements for sending missions to neighbouring courts either for specific business or even for periods of study of court etiquette and procedures. There were symbols of authority carried by such ambassadors or messengers corresponding to the modern letters of credence or accreditation or diplomatic passports. Similarly various communities observed rules for the safe passage of messengers and for their immunity from harm even when they carried hostile or bad messages".<sup>13</sup>

From the foregoing, it is clear that in traditional African states there was some system of external relations usually accorded necessary recognition and privileges as in the Greek-city states

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11. Ibid., p. 104.

12. Onimode, Bade, op. cit., p. 19.

13. Ade-Ajayi, op. cit., p. 43.

to which references are usually made. It was recognised among African states that the relations between states could not be conducted by the use of force and that force or violence could only be used in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort. There were great considerations for peaceful relations between states and there were some implicit laws which were above narrow state interests or momentary expediency. These were accepted principles to facilitate trade with and through neighbouring states particularly at a time when people trekked or rode on horse back across several territories for trade. In many instances such inter-state relations and laws guiding them were complemented by inter-state marriages between members of the ruling families and by exchange of gifts between sovereigns. These inter-state relations, as we have noted earlier, were essentially international relations of which each of the states in the interaction had its own policy for the conduct of such external relations.

(b) Inter-African Relations after 1900\*

Continued inter-African relations after 1900 AD gave impetus to the development of national foreign policies of African states. Such relationships during the colonial period and after helped to perpetuate and propagate a sense of common historical antecedents, geographical contiguity of all African states, their social affinity and common dependent status in world politics, all of which combines to foster a regeneration of the spirit of African brotherhood and the idea of a new Africa. This 'spirit' and 'idea' encouraged

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\* The year 1900 is, perhaps arbitrarily, chosen as indicative of approximately the date when African states lost their freedom and were known to have become colonised effectively.



the intensification of inter-African co-operation and relations (during and after colonisation) for the ultimate realisation of the hopes and aspirations of the 'new Africa'. Considering the importance which African leaders attach to the ideals of a new Africa, one would say that the consciousness of African freedom, African unity and African rights, were in part responsible for the early formation of the ideas of foreign policy in a modern African state. The idea of a new Africa widened the scope of inter-African relations and co-operation. It fostered consciousness among Africans of their rights to freedom, equality and justice. It encouraged the establishment of inter-African movements and organisations for the realisation of these rights. The idea of a new Africa was significant in the promotion of inter-African relations and in the awakening of the consciousness of international intercourse. *Ipsa-facto*, the idea influenced the development of Nigerian foreign policy.

One of the major movements that emerged from the whole idea of a new Africa was the Pan-African Movement<sup>14</sup> which had a significant impact on virtually all African countries. The movement triggered off a pragmatic step towards African brotherhood and a momentum for African solidarity and inter-state relations. Pan-Africanism called for African freedom and role in the world. The realisation of these objectives became central issues in the foreign policy of Nigeria and other African countries. What is Pan-Africanism?

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14. For details of Pan-Africanism, see Imanuel Geiss, The Pan African Movement, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1974. Also Langley, Ayodele J., Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa; 1900-1945: A study in Ideology and Social Classes. Oxford University Press, 1973. See too the five dimensions of Pan-Africanism by Mazrui, Ali A., Africa's International Relations: The Diplomacy of Dependency and Change, Westview Press Inc., Colorado, 1977, p. 68.



The term as we use it here refers to that moving spirit for the realisation of the place and role of the African continent in world affairs. It was both an idea and a movement. Pan-Africanism as an idea aimed at arousing the consciousness of being African, created the feeling of Africanness or African image and questioned the role of the African continent vis-a-vis other continents in the world. As a movement, Pan-Africanism sought to secure for Africa an equal place among the other continents in the global system, to demand what is African, to take and hold it, and to contribute meaningfully to international peace and concord. Pan-Africanism brought closer African countries and leaders, who began to conceptualise on the object of the movement and finally arrived at various conceptions of it. According to Ali Mazrui,<sup>15</sup> some saw Pan-Africanism as the clarion call for the unity of all black peoples and countries of Africa while others interpreted it as an invitation for solidarity of all black peoples in the world irrespective of the country to which they belong. In real terms, Pan-Africanism succeeded in eliciting the growth of self-confidence of the elite in their demand for the right and responsibility of Africa in the global system. In the process, various conferences of continental and extra-continental significance were held to which Nigerian leaders attended and exchanged views with other leaders on the prevailing issues of international relations.<sup>16</sup> The discussions, acquaintance, and feelings of common colonial problems generated at these conferences contributed in no small measure to the evolution of the sentiments of African freedom and unity which today, form the

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15. Mazrui, Ali A., *ibid.*

16. Imanuel Geiss; *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 192-3.

centrepiece of Nigerian foreign policy.

## AFRO-EUROPEAN RELATIONS

Foreign policy development in Nigeria as in the rest of Africa owes much to relations with Europe. Such relationships could be discussed in two phases in order to highlight the impact.

### The Early Contact:

Details of African international relations become clearer when we study closely the interactions between the Europeans and Africans from the 15th century, as well as the treaties of friendship and trade entered into then.

### Nigeria/Portuguese Relations:

It has been noted in the earlier section that contact between Nigeria and Europe started when the first Portuguese visited Benin (1472). The account of the visit by Joan d'Avairo, who in 1485 negotiated and successfully opened up trade between Portugal and the Kingdom of Benin,<sup>17</sup> indicates a long period of bilateral trade relations between the Benins and the Portuguese, which was regulated by some form of agreement. In order to further the trade as a result of the mutual benefits arising from it, the Kings of Benin and Portugal exchanged Ambassadors as far back as 1486. Thomas Hodgkin wrote about the presence of "the Portuguese Embassy at the court of Benin" and drew his evidence from a letter dated 20th October 1516 to King Manuel of Portugal from Duarte Pires, who was the Portuguese representative in Benin.<sup>18</sup> However, according to Onimode, it was in the reign of King John II of Portugal (1481-95)

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17. Onimode, Bade, op. cit., p. 20.

18. Hodgkin, Thomas, op. cit., pp. 127-8.

that the first Benin Ambassador, Captain Gwato, was sent to Portugal. To explain how Benin-Portugal relationship developed, Bade Onimode said when the Portuguese arrived on the coast of West Africa and met extensive trade that had existed for long, they started by buying from middlemen and gradually turned the trade to an African-European axis. Later they made it directly dependent on Europe, thereby destroying the inter-African trade and its manufacturing technology base.<sup>19</sup> A similar relationship is known to have existed between Benin and the Dutch in the seventeenth century.<sup>20</sup>

#### Nigeria/British Relations:

Treaties between the British government and the kings in the Niger area in the eighteenth century illustrate early development of Africa's international relations and foreign policy. For example, both Kings George Pepple of Bonny and Jaja of Opobo entered respectively into bilateral commercial treaties with Her Britannic Majesty's Government by the 1870s. One such treaty is reproduced hereunder.<sup>21</sup>

#### Commercial Treaty with King Jaja, January 4, 1873

In the name of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, we hereby acknowledge Jaja King of Opobo and fully entitled to all considerations as such.

The British traders in River Opobo shall pay the same amount of "comey" as British traders in Bonny. No tax or import shall be placed on them. Any disputes which occur between them and King Jaja's peoples are to be referred to Her Britannic Majesty's consul for settlement.

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19. Onimode, op. cit., p. 15.

20. Hodgkin, op. cit., pp. 156-7.

21. Nwabara, S.N., Iboland - A century of contact with Britain 1860-1960. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977, p. 83. This author wrote that George Taubman Goldie and his Central African Trading Company concluded thirty-seven treaties with various Kings and Chiefs in Nigeria, which made it possible to establish commercial relations between Nigeria and Britain (pp. 79-93).



After the 5 April 1873, the King of Opobo shall allow no trading establishment or bulk in or off the town of Opobo or any trading vessel to come higher up the river than the White-Mans-Beach opposite Hippopotamus Creek. If any trading ships or steamer proceeds further up the river the the creek above mentioned after having been duly warned to the contrary, the said trading ship or steamer may be seized by King Jaja, and detained until a fine of 100 puncheons (large casks of palm oil) be paid by the owners to King Jaja.

Signed on board Her Britannic Majesty's ship Pioneer, off Opobo Town, 4 January 1873.

Signed

King Jaja  
John E. Commerell, Commodore  
Charles Livingstone, consul

Jaja's treaty is illustrative of the practice of external relations by 1873. It recognised the authority of the King and his right of control of all activities within the area. It also acknowledged the King's right to determine the scope and direction of external trade, hence the movement of foreign trading ships was limited to "White Man's Beach". According to Nwabara, in subsequent years when British merchants invaded Jaja's oil markets in Opobo and sought to proceed further inland, the King relied on the treaty of 1873 to resist inland penetration and thereafter made several representations to both the British Foreign Office and the Marquis of Salisbury pointing out that his territory and trading rights were being violated.<sup>22</sup> Not satisfied with the Foreign Office reply, King Jaja and the chiefs in council decided to send a delegation to London to protest against the actions of British merchants and officials in Opobo. The delegation consisted of the King's son, Sunday Jaja and three chiefs, high ranking members of the King's ruling council comparable to Ministers or

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22. Ibid., pp. 84-86.

Secretaries of State in contemporary President's or Prime Minister's Cabinet.<sup>23</sup>

Reference could also be made to treaties between Britain and the Delta states of Nigeria,<sup>24</sup> which were purely consular in nature, aimed at protecting the interests and commerce of both Bonny and British citizens. According to Professor Awa, the British-Bonny treaty specifically

"forbade the imprisonment, detention or maltreatment of a British subject by the Bonny authorities, stipulated that disputes between the two parties be settled by a committee composed of English traders and the King and gentlemen of Bonny, warned the government of Bonny that any infringement of the terms of the treaty would bring them under the displeasure of the King of England, and that English men-of-war would, on any complaint come up the Bonny River to protect English vessels; and any English seaman guilty of ill-treating a Bonny man would be punished by the captain of his vessel".<sup>25</sup>

Most of these Nigerian scholars have impressed that the treaties illustrate that Nigerians have had some experience in foreign relations practice, prior to colonial rule. The view is that the earliest official representatives of the Crown went to Nigeria as commercial officers and diplomatic consuls to provide expert advice and consular assistance to Staff of the Royal Niger Company. Although Afro-European relationship subsequently changed to that of "the ruler and the ruled", due in the main to covert activities of consular officers, the "gradual supplanting" of host governments and later the application of superior military might of the colonialists, the interactions that existed were in essence of a diplomatic nature.

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23. Ibid., p. 86.

24. Dike, K.O., Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885. Oxford University Press, London, 1959, Chapter IV.

25. Awa, E.O., Federal Government in Nigeria, p. 260.

The impact of African-European relations on the development of foreign policy was also felt in the northern states of Nigeria. As early as 1824 friendly relations had been established between Great Britain and the Empire of Bornu, leading to the sending of a British diplomatic consul.<sup>26</sup> In 1851 a commercial treaty between Bornu and Great Britain was arranged by Dr. Barth and Overweg. Before this time, the shehu of Bornu had had an envoy in Tripoli - Libya, who incidentally became friendly with the British envoy there, through whom in 1853 specimens of Bornu manufactures were sent to England. In the same year (1853) Dr. Barth concluded on behalf of the British government a treaty with Sokoto, to enable a British merchant to establish himself at Kano. Similar reports from Gerhard Rohlfs of Germany who journeyed from Tripoli to Lagos and another report from Dr. Gustar Nachtigal who took presents from King William of Prussia to Shehu Omar at Kukawa, as an appreciation for his (Omar's) assistance to German explorers,<sup>27</sup> confirm the scope and significance of African-European relations to the development of interest in extra-African affairs. They also confirm that, before the "scramble for Africa" came to the minds of European Powers at the end of the Franco-German War in 1870, Nigerians had had experience in diplomatic activities and international intercourse from which foreign policy practices of today could be said to have derived their origin.

Later developments between the Fulani Empire and Britain also point to a tradition in the conduct of relations between one state and another. A few of the correspondence (reproduced below) between

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26. Blackwell, H.F., op. cit., p. 1.

27. Ibid., pp. 1-5.



the Sultan of Sokoto and the High Commissioner to Nigeria illustrates this tradition and also show how African-European relationship changed, after four hundred years, to overshadow its import. These diplomatic exchanges are revealing:

"Letter from High Commissioner to the Sultan of Sokoto. re-Bauchi

In the name of the most Merciful God. Peace be to the generous Prophet. Salutations, peace, and numberless honours.

To the Emir of Mussulmans in Sokoto, whose name is Abdul-Lahai, the son of the late Emir of Musselmans, whose name is Atiku. I desire to inform you who are head of the Mohammedans and to whom the Fulani rulers in this country look for advice and guidance that ... I have heard that you sent a letter to the Emir of Bauchi warning him to desist from oppressing his people, but he does not obey your instructions nor listen to your words of wisdom. I have, therefore, been compelled to send my troops to compel him to act properly. I do not know whether he will oppose them and fight. If he does so, he will probably lose his place. But I do not wish to drive out the Fulani and the Mohammedans, I only wish that they shall rule wisely and with humanity. If therefore the Emir is driven out because he himself attacks my troops, I shall endeavour to find his proper successor and shall install him as king if he is a man who will rule well. So also in the matter of Kontagora, I hear that he and Abubakar will not listen to the words of your messenger or desist from raiding the towns of Zaria. So Zaria has appealed to me for help, and I have sent troops to support him and to drive out these marauders.

Peace be to those who seek peace and trouble on those who make trouble.

Since I wrote this letter I have news that Ibrahim of Kontagora and all his people and following have been captured by my troops. I am restoring all the people to their places but Ibrahim and his chiefs will be sent to me to be judged." 28

(Signed) F.D. Lugard  
March 1902

On receipt of this letter, the Sultan of Sokoto issued a reply as follows:

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28. Ibid., p. 13.

(A translation of Arabic letter)

"From Sultan of Sokoto to the High Commissioner of Great Britain.

In the name of God. Blessing and Peace, contentment and increasing honour to you. Salutations. After salutation, I have to inform you that we do not invite your administration in the Emirate of Bauchi and if you have interfered, we do not want support from any one except from God. You have your religion and we have ours. We seek help from God, the Best Supporter, and there is no power except in him, the Mighty and Exalted. Peace." 29

On another occasion the representative of the High Commissioner addressed a letter to the Sultan as follows:

"From Colonel T.L.N. Morland to the Sultan of Sokoto.

From Colonel Morland the representative of the High Commissioner. Salutations. After salutations know that the cause of our fighting with Aliu is that Aliu received with honour Mogaji, the murderer of a whiteman, when he came to Kano, and that he also sought war between us. For those two reasons we fought him and are now sitting in his house.

We are coming to Sokoto and from this time and for ever a whiteman and soldiers will sit down in the Sokoto country. We have prepared for war because Abdu Sarikin Muslimin said there was nothing between us but war. But we do not want war unless you yourself seek war. If you receive us in peace, we will not enter your house, we will not harm you or any of your people.

If you desire to become our friend you must not receive the Mogaji. More, we desire you to seek him with your utmost endeavour and place him in our hands. If you are loyal to us, you will remain in your position as Sarikin Muslimin, fear not ...

My present to you is five pieces of brocade."<sup>30</sup>

(Signed) T.L.N. Morland

February 1903

The Sultan of Sokoto replied to Colonel Morland's letter, thus:

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29. Ibid., p. 14.

30. Ibid.

(Translation of Arabic letter)

"From Sultan of Sokoto to Colonel T.L.N. Morland.

From us to Colonel Morland. All salutations to you. Know that I have seen your messenger with your letter, the purport of which I understand. I have sent to call in my councillors from every district, but now that I see they are taking some time to assemble, I am sending you back your messenger. When we have assembled and have agreed on our decision, I will write to you what is enjoined on me by them for the settlement of this affair. Salutations." 31

(Signed) Attahiru Emir El Musslimin

The Sultan of Sokoto

February 1903

These correspondences, their contents and style of presentation no doubt portray substantial experience in the conduct and management of relations between one state and another. In other words, foreign policy as the set of decisions, actions and reactions of a state towards the others, has been practised for a long time in Nigeria and therefore has a tradition and precedence upon which certain subsequent practices could be based.

#### African-European Relations in Colonial Times:

Colonial relations between Nigeria and Britain made a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Nigerian foreign policy. In fact the period of colonisation was the time for political rejuvenation and external policy modernisation. That period gave the people of Nigeria the time to prepare and to participate actively in contemporary international relations. Nigerians had the opportunity to learn about the activities of other sovereign nations and the existing opportunities in many distant countries. This was made possible by the growth of mass

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31. Ibid., p. 14.



communication and transportation. Through these lessons, nationalists were able to set the pattern and order the priorities of Nigeria in external relations. Moreover, the widening dimension of international conflict and the changing pattern of power distribution gave rise to a series of treaties and conventions governing relations between and among nations. Nigeria was then represented by Britain at many international conferences and several treaties and agreements were signed on its behalf by the British government.<sup>32</sup> Copies of these were deposited in government ministries, departments and public libraries. Nigerians who worked in these places, as well as others who had interest or were being prepared for the foreign service, were granted access to the documents, from which they might have acquired some knowledge of the technicalities of foreign policy.

Another important element that influenced foreign policy development was the colonial education system. By its design, education from the primary school through the secondary and even University levels, was concerned with teaching the people about the way of life and events in Europe. Those who were interested in history, for example, learned about the numerous European wars and the various treaties that ended them. Having studied say the treaty of Utrecht, the Concert of Europe, the Congress of Vienna and the activities of distinguished European statesmen and diplomats like Castlereagh, Metternich, Hardenberg and Alexander,

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32. Federal Ministry of Justice: Nigeria's treaties in Force, vol. 1, for the period 1st October 1960 to 30th June 1970; Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1971. See 'Part 1 - Treaties and other international Agreements recognised as binding on Nigeria by virtue of United Kingdom's signature or ratification'.

and Talleyrand, Nigerians were thus equipped for the practice of foreign policy. Added to this, was the flow into Nigeria of newspapers, magazines and journals containing information about the foreign policy of other nations. Apart from education within the country, there were other Nigerians educated in Europe and the United States, who came back to become the most dynamic and articulate leaders that Nigeria had. It was therefore a matter of putting into practice what they learnt. We have noted, in the preceding section while examining the place of political parties in the Nigerian setting, some of these Western-educated nationalists that led the country to independence. They made significant contribution to the development of Nigerian foreign policy.

Finally, Nigeria's colonial relationship with Britain - a country that had world wide empire and an influential role in world politics - gave Nigeria greater international exposure and wider scope of relations in the world. It was considered desirable by Nigerian leaders to maintain friendly relations with all the erstwhile members of the British Empire. Apart from the bilateral relations with the respective countries, Nigeria had automatic membership of the Commonwealth of Nations, by virtue of its colonial relations. A record of the number of messages of goodwill and friendship received at independence would show that the majority came from Commonwealth countries and the Western Alliance.<sup>33</sup> Also the admission of Nigeria as the 99th member of the United Nations was sponsored as it were, by Australia, Canada, Ceylon (Sri-Lanka), the Federation of Malaya (Malaysia),

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33. Federal Ministry of Information records.

Ghana, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Tunisia,\* South Africa and the United Kingdom,<sup>34</sup> again reflecting the same club-tie. The opening of diplomatic missions in Nigeria followed the same pattern. The earliest missions were from Africa and Western capitalist countries.

Indeed the British connection and influence cannot be ruled out of the pattern of external relationship that Nigeria had at independence. The British colonial administration's co-operation with Nigerian leaders in implementing the first training programme for the earliest corps of Nigerian diplomats, was an important factor in the shaping of the country's foreign policy. In 1956, the Nigerian government designed a programme for the recruitment and training of personnel for the future diplomatic service of Nigeria.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly the government submitted a proposal to the effect to the House of Representatives and secured £10,000 that year and a further £20,000 the following year for the training of foreign service officers.<sup>36</sup> To implement the programme, the government decided to train some of the recruits at Oxford University for one year while some others "underwent a short course for young diplomats at the Foreign Office", in London.<sup>37</sup> Thereafter the later group were attached to British

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\* The only sponsor without a Commonwealth link.

34. United Nations, General Assembly, Official Records, Fifteenth Session, 893rd Plenary Meeting, New York, Friday 7 October 1960. Of the twenty-six representatives who inscribed their names to welcome Nigeria to the UN on the floor of the General Assembly two were communist countries, others were non-aligned and Western alliance nations.

35. Mr. Prime Minister; A Selection of Speeches made by Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1964, p. 21.

36. Kirk-Greene, A.H.M., Diplomacy and diplomats: the formation of foreign Service Cadres in Black Africa. Butterworths Scientific Publications, London, 1973, p. 283.

37. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., p. 22.



Embassies at the Hague, Bonn, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Washington, and the British High Commission in Canada, to enable them gain experience in the field.<sup>38</sup> It must be noted also that the earliest Nigerian missions in Khartoum and Jeddah as well as in Fernando Po and Libreville were under the aegis of the British Embassies in those countries. In appreciating the assistance of the British government, the Prime Minister told the House of Representatives -

"I know that the house will recognise with me the great debt which we owe to the British Foreign Office and to the proud and ancient University of Oxford for their most willing help in fitting our young men for their new career." <sup>39</sup>

#### NATIONALISM AND RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

Nationalism was a major factor in the development of interest in foreign policy, for its primary aim was to regain lost freedom so as to assert and project Nigerian personality in the international system. Certain events and activities associated with the growth of nationalism can be said to have contributed to the development of Nigerian foreign policy. These include the role of nationalist movements and political parties, the impact of the Second World War; the ideological rivalry between the super powers for spheres of influence in Africa etc.

Nationalist movements and political parties in Nigeria made a tremendous contribution to the development of the country's foreign policy. Among the nationalist movements that made substantial impact on the development of Nigerian foreign policy we should include -

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38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), the West African Students' Union (WASU) both with important centres in England and USA, the Nigerian Progress Union in London (1924) led by Ladipo Solanke and other Nigerian students in Britain, the Zikist movement etc. For example, the NCBWA consisted of representatives of all four British West African colonies and carried its anti-colonial campaign outside the West African region. It sent several petitions to the colonial office in London demanding greater political rights for Africans. It criticised the division of Togoland between Britain and France without any consultation of the Africans in West Africa.<sup>40</sup> The Congress encouraged the formation of local newspapers and journals and a West African Press Union for the purpose of fostering collaboration among West African countries as well as disseminating information about events in other lands which affect them. Like WASU, it performed Pan-African functions which contributed to the awareness in Europe of demands of West African colonies. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) had as early as 1938 stated in its charter that its goal was to free Nigeria completely from British colonisation and to secure "a position of equal partnership with the other member states of the British Commonwealth of Nations."<sup>41</sup> This was a profound foreign policy statement at a time when the idea of self-rule or independence for a country of black people was neither imagined nor contemplated. This idea survived the time and emerged as a foreign policy objective in post-independent Nigeria.

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40. Imanuel Geiss, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

41. Awo: The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Cambridge University Press, London, 1960, p. 121.

By far, political parties in Nigeria made the most remarkable contribution toward the development of the country's foreign policy. However since some of the parties have been discussed in the preceding section, we need not repeat the discussion here, but we must recall that every Nigerian political party tried to initiate and express ideas about what the foreign policy of the country ought to be.

The impact of the Second World War on foreign policy development is another factor. Just as the war influenced the growth of nationalism and the emergence of new nations, so also did it influence the formation of foreign policy by the new nations. African involvement in the war-theatres of the world could be said to have induced crucial changes in African initiatives and reactions toward colonial politics and economics, resulting in new dimensions in African politics.

Many Nigerians who fought in the War had the opportunity of interacting with people from Asia, Europe and America. They exchanged ideas on a variety of issues, chanted slogans of freedom, equality and democracy for all. They learnt of the promises of the Allied nations and the Atlantic Charter which declared:

"to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them; ... and to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity; to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security." 42

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42. Staff of the Committee and the Department of State; A Decade of American Foreign Policy; Basic Documents, 1941-49. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1950, p. 1.



Consequently, at the end of the war, these ideas were translated into action. Some of the discharged soldiers joined the nationalist movement, while some engaged in various services through which they contributed to the emergence of a new Nigeria and all that it stands for. Secondly, the weakness of Europe due to the war and the emergence of new centres of attraction in the world necessitated new outlooks and new expectations. In fact the war fostered a realisation of the tenuous political and economic strength of the colonial powers, whose weakness both during and immediately after the hostilities caused fundamental shifts in the world's political and economic power centres and encouraged the search for other competitive markets for African products. On the other hand, the war-stimulated African economy sought new sources of raw materials and wider markets. This led to increased American involvement in the economic and political activities of African states. Africa therefore ceased to be the preserve of the European colonialists and with the advent of transport revolution, the continent became more accessible and every African state was linked to the other and to the wider world.

Another closely linked factor in the nationalist ferment which influenced the thinking on foreign policy was the emergence of bipolarity in world politics. The apparent division of the world into two opposing military-cum-ideological camps gave leaders in the emergent nations much cause for deep thought about the best possible foreign policy posture to adopt. With the realisation that the rivalry between the super powers has

precipitated another struggle for Africa, both directly and through the agency of their allies,<sup>43</sup> there was the general anxiety of a possible movement from one form of colonisation to another. This anxiety gave way to critical debate and sometimes division among nationalists and political parties as to whether to align or not with any bloc. We have noted the division of opinion among Nigerian leaders and parties regarding relations with the power blocs. Although Nigeria eventually decided against partisan involvement in the east-west rivalry, the government appeared to have been haunted for a long time by the twin desires to preserve the friendly ties established through long association with the Western countries, and to demonstrate its non-aligned stand by maintaining similar friendly ties with the communist countries. When the government overcame the anxiety about the implications of the infiltration of communism and the dangers of neo-colonialism and imperialism, it proceeded to establish relations with both Western capitalist and Eastern communist countries. Simultaneously policies were formulated to guide the conduct of those relations so as to eschew partisanship. In effect the decision to be non-aligned in world politics which is a cardinal attribute of Nigerian foreign policy was the result of the emergence of bi-polarity in world politics.

#### INDEPENDENCE AND THE ATTRACTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

Independence is a major factor in the evolution and development of Nigerian foreign policy. The attainment of independence brought with it the responsibilities of nationhood. It called for a national

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43. Chaliand, Gerard, The Struggle for Africa: Conflict of the Great Powers. Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1982.

mobilization of resources and initiative for the management of the country's domestic and external affairs. In so far as foreign policy is concerned, Independence created a challenge for both leaders and followers, who then, at least in principle, accepted the urgent need to fashion a national policy, as distinct from their individual and party views for the conduct of the country's external relations. It offered to Nigeria the sovereign right to decide on principles, formulate policies and adopt its own style for the conduct of its external relations.

Apart from the inherent rights of independence and the provisions of the constitution in respect of the country's external affairs, the agreement among political parties on a number of essential issues of external policy was an important element in the emergence of a national foreign policy. We have noted earlier the foreign policy proposals of the major political parties in the first Republic of Nigeria. These proposals were at the initiative of the parties based on the convictions of the majority of the leaders. There were both similarities and dissimilarities in the foreign policy positions of the parties as follows:

- (i) the NCNC and NEPU foreign policy positions were much closer to each other.
- (ii) the NPC and AG shared similar views on many foreign policy issues but differed on two issues regarding the degree of:
  - (a) relations with Arab countries advocated by NPC and
  - (b) relations with West African states preferred by the AG.
- (iii) the NCNC and NEPU differed substantially from the foreign policy positions of NPC and AG. Thus while NCNC and NEPU advocated closer economic and political ties with all African countries, the NPC wanted closer ties with the Arab countries and the AG wanted a Union of West African states. Second, the NCNC and NEPU advocated a policy of "non-alignment" with any particular axis of geopolitics, be it NATO or Warsaw Pact; the NPC and AG instead preferred Nigeria to join one military bloc.



A further breakdown of the party positions will show the following:

<u>Agreements</u>	<u>Disagreements</u>
1. Liberation of Africa and opposition to colonialism elsewhere in the world.	1. Union of West African states.
2. Membership of UNO and Commonwealth.	2. Alliance with Arab-League.
3. Major role in continental affairs (by implication an acceptance of Pan-Africanism).	3. Alignment with one of the Power blocs.

Amidst the agreements and disagreements, Nigerian leaders met several times at independence to review the differences in the foreign policy positions of their respective parties. There were meetings of all party leaders, debates on foreign policy in the parliament,<sup>44</sup> the "All Nigeria Peoples' conference" of August 1961<sup>45</sup> etc. Through these meetings, major differences were harmonised and essential agreements reached became adopted as the country's foreign policy position. Consensus was possible on foreign policy for several reasons, the first being the realisation that Nigeria had become independent thereby having the obligations of a sovereign state, and therefore it was not a time for quibbling on its external policy. Other factors included the Prime Minister's open-mindedness which made possible the aggregation of enlightened views; the establishment of the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations" as it was then called; the appointment of a foreign policy adviser in the person of Dr. K.O. Mbadiwe and foreign minister Dr. Jaja Wachuku, from among well educated and articulate

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44. Debates in the House of Representatives, Lagos, 1960, Jan., March, April, May, August, September and November Sessions. See also Mr. Prime Minister - Speeches of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, op. cit., pp. 21-22, 35-37, 41-42, 61-85.

45. Philips, Claude S., Jr, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy. North Western University Press, U.S.A., 1984, pp. 54-62.

Nigerian politicians as well as the effective role of the opposition led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the federal parliament. The resulting consensus on a national foreign policy, was spelt out in one of the sessional papers as follows:<sup>46</sup>

1. Foreign policy must be geared to defend and promote the interests of Nigeria and its citizens anywhere in the world.
2. To oppose colonialism, racism and apartheid both in Africa and elsewhere in the world.
3. Nigeria would play a major role in continental affairs by working to bring about closer understanding and co-operation among the countries of Africa "while respecting the sovereign equality of all African states, big or small".
4. Nigeria would be a member of the UNO and Commonwealth as well as other international organisations through which "we will help to preserve world peace and promote the happiness of mankind in general".
5. Nigeria would not align with any power bloc.
6. Nigeria would remain on friendly terms with every nation in the world which recognizes and respects Nigeria's sovereignty.
7. Nigeria would encourage foreign investment and create conditions necessary for the acquisition of scientific and technological know-how from the more advanced countries in the world.

These foreign policy positions adopted at independence have persisted till today despite the changes in regimes and governments of Nigeria.

#### INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The attractions of international organisations like the Commonwealth and the United Nations were yet other factors which

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46. "Proposals on Nigerian Foreign Policy - Summary Records", May 1960. See also Debates in the House of Representatives, August Session, 1960, and Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., pp. 21-22, 36-37, 63-66.

inspired Nigerian leaders in forging the foreign policy of the country. Many leaders saw membership of the United Nations and Commonwealth as the golden symbol of the sovereign equality of states and a major opportunity for the developing nations to draw attention to the injustices of colonial exploitation by the imperialist nations. In one of his earliest foreign policy statements in the parliament, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, expressed Nigeria's interest to belong to existing international organizations, when he said, inter alia,

"we have already declared our intention of a plan to join both the Commonwealth and the United Nations. In regard to the former, it is important to understand that all members of the Commonwealth are autonomous communities equal in status and in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs. While therefore benefiting greatly from the free interchange of ideas and consultation between the members of the Commonwealth and from their experience within the framework of the United Nations, we shall, nevertheless, have a free hand to select those policies which we consider to be most advantageous for Nigeria, subject always to our belief in the principles of the United Nations".<sup>47</sup>

Nigerian leaders were unanimous that the country would accede to the membership of both the Commonwealth and the United Nations Organisation. The unanimity was motivated by the desire to belong to the community of independent nations and the fact that some African countries like Ethiopia and Liberia, and other erstwhile colonies that became independent were seen to take their places in these organisations on the basis of equality with the more advanced nations including the former colonial rulers. This seemingly elevated position of former dependent states was much admired by Nigerian leaders, one of whom commented thus,

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47. Debates in the House of Representatives, August session 1960, *quoted in* Philips, Claude S., Jr, op. cit., p. 40.



"Liberia and Haiti and Ethiopia have an opportunity to espouse the cause of freedom for the black races. There is no doubt that India, Pakistan, Egypt, USSR and the Arab States would support them .... Whilst the Republic of Liberia may be proud that, in the last hundred years, she has been the 'Lone Star' in the firmament of Africa, she should not rest on her oars, but she should make it possible for other African communities to join her as free and sovereign states in the family of nations". 48

The fascination which membership of international organisations had for Nigerian leaders at independence was not limited to the United Nations and the Commonwealth. It would be recalled that in 1955 when the "Colombo Powers and certain Asian countries" convened a conference of Asian and African states at Bandung but failed to invite Nigeria, all Nigerian leaders, and most vocal of them being Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, expressed disappointment and outrage at the omission of Nigeria. Although there were economic motives for joining international organisations,<sup>49</sup> the desire to belong to the family of nations and to demonstrate the emergent sovereign rights of the nations were important factors that gingered the impetus to Nigeria's internationalism and the formation of corresponding policies.

#### THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC FACTOR

Economic necessities are vital factors of all nations' external policy. The urgent need to build a healthy society upon a self-reliant national economy was one of the major driving forces in the formation of Nigeria's foreign policy. Having been for several decades under a capitalist colonial system and

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48. Zik: A selection from the speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Cambridge University Press, 1961, pp. 60-61.

49. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., pp. 36-37. The economic reasons for acceding to international organisations.

having gained independence as a sovereign nation-state at a time when national economic capacity was a major determinant of political power, Nigerian leaders decided to adopt such external policies that would facilitate and not hamper the chances for economic co-operation and collaboration with the wealthier nations of the world. According to Prime Minister Balewa,

"The reason why I personally want to see Nigeria taken into the Commonwealth is this: I know very well the immense opportunities and the great need for development in our country and I want to ensure, so far as is possible, that the development is on sound lines. At present we are an under-developed country. In order to expand our economy we must seek investments from the richer and more developed countries, investments both of money and technical skill. It is going to be very difficult sometimes to sift the genuine from the self-interested, and that is one reason why I should warn that Nigeria must be careful in recognising her real genuine friends".<sup>50</sup>

It is obvious that every Nigerian leader was aware of the economic necessities of the country. There was, however, no doubt about the economic potentialities of Nigeria but at independence the country needed earnestly technical assistance to transform its potentialities into a resourceful modern national economy. It was realised that the traditional method of economic transformation would be inappropriate for the required rapid changes in a contemporary economic mode. In considering therefore what external policy options the country should adopt, the parties were in effect thinking about what had to be done in order to attract friends who were capable and willing to lend their expertise for the transformation of a rural

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50. Ibid., pp. 36-37

and dependent economy into an industrial and self-sustaining national economy. An economic motive was at the base of the consideration of a national external posture. Chief Obafemi Awolowo tried to expose the economic motives of Nigerian foreign policy when he opposed NCNC's proposal of "non-alignment with any axis of geo-politics". He condemned the idea as "disreputable and dangerous tactics of playing the East against the West in the quest for foreign aid." However, what Nigeria wanted most was not aid but co-operation and collaboration for industrial take-off. The first option was to seek the collaboration of the more industrialised nations mainly from Western Europe and the USA, understandably because of Nigeria's capitalist orientation and affinity with these countries during the decades of colonisation. When later the need for diversification of collaboration arose, the policy was broadened and Nigeria began to seek trade and technology from Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America etc.

The importance of economic factors in the formulation of foreign policy could be explained by the effort of every nation to link trade policy with the foreign policy and political goals. Moreover the pattern of power distribution in world politics corresponds with national (or regional) economic and military capacity. Put in another way, the weight and influence of a country today are roughly commensurate with its economic capacity and military strength. We are not however trying to involve the traditional arguments on political or economic determinism for it has often been argued that as "the political systems shape the economic systems so economic factors shape political outcomes".<sup>51</sup>

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51. Spero Edelman, Joan, The Politics of International Economic Relations. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1977, p. 4.



It is however obvious that the emergence of new international patterns of production and system of economic relations have added new dimension to the structure and operation of political relations among nations. This applies to the developed nations as well as to the developing ones. Spero underlined the economic motives of the foreign policy of new nations thus:

"The major political concerns of these countries are economic: development, aid, trade, foreign investment and ultimate independence. Their demand is for no less than a restructuring of the international relations between the haves and have nots." 52

It is thus obvious that to further these objectives would necessitate the development of an integrated foreign policy for the conduct of both political and international economic relations.

#### THE CIVIL WAR

Another factor which contributed greatly to the evolution of Nigeria's foreign policy was the civil war. We have already discussed briefly the role of the military governments in Nigerian politics and noted the specific adroit decision to give Nigeria "one voice" in international affairs by centralising foreign policy decision-making processes, abolishing regional representations abroad and eliminating the interference of regional governments in the country's external policy. With the outbreak of the civil war, Nigeria's foreign policy acquired a new dimension and impetus. The civil war exposed the foreign policy-making machinery, for the first time, to war-time decision making, usually characterised by a state of emergency, ad-hoc changes in strategy, conference diplomacy, external propaganda, expansion and intensification of relationships etc. Apart from

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52. Ibid., p. 3.

giving the country's foreign policy a unified outlook which it hitherto lacked, the civil war gave the foreign policy machinery the simulation or conditioning which one would say was a departure from the routine practice and a desirable test of its ability to cope with emergency situations in world politics.

The civil war was the first practical illustration of the strategic importance of Nigeria's immediate neighbours and indeed the entire continent of Africa. It became obvious that to maintain closer friendly ties with neighbouring countries were prerequisites of evading easy vulnerability. If this had not been realised and followed with vigour, perhaps some close neighbours of Nigeria could have offered their territory to be used by Biafra to launch attacks on Nigeria. In Nigeria's bid to curb the collaboration of African countries with Biafra and its penetration into the international system, the strategic importance of Africa became quite glaring. The series of peace conferences that were convened in Africa, most being under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity, helped to make Nigeria's African policy become deep rooted.

It was also the civil war that widened and intensified Nigeria-Soviet relationships. At the time when Nigeria needed arms desperately to prosecute the war, its traditional friends - Britain and the United States - adopted "a wait-and-see attitude".<sup>53</sup> Then Nigeria turned to the Soviet Union where it obtained some ammunition and jet fighters to conduct the war against Biafra. Ever since then Nigeria and the Soviet Union have had very cordial

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53. Stremmlau, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1977, p. 65. Also in Carvenka.

relations, which has been extended to all East-European countries. Thus disappears the anxiety, which hitherto existed, of the dangers of importing communist revolution through increased bilateral relations with the communist countries. The civil war did not only enhance Nigeria's relations with the Eastern communist countries, it also, according to Stremlau, made Nigeria's non-aligned status acquire new credibility.<sup>54</sup> It also enabled the Federal Government to end the interference of regional/state governments in external affairs and to have exclusive authority to determine Nigeria's foreign policy. To these ends, the civil war is a watershed in the country's foreign policy.

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54. Ibid., p. 80.



**PART II      EXPLAINING THE CONCEPTS**

## CHAPTER 3

## THE CONCEPT OF FOREIGN POLICY

It is important at this juncture to try to explain the term "foreign policy" because it has been used by many people on many occasions to portray many different things. As a result, the meaning of the term is sometimes not understood, at other times confused, while many just assume that "foreign policy" is one of the slogans used by politicians to demonstrate their versatility. The need for explanation of our concept is the more important to provide a working definition appropriate to the subject under discussion and to minimise possible ambiguity in our use of the term "foreign policy" in the context. A few examples will help to illustrate the ambiguity in the use of the concept. A foreign firm while trying to secure a contract with the National Supply Company said in the course of a discussion that "the foreign policy of our two countries are identical in their opposition to the apartheid policy of South Africa." Similarly, after a military coup in Nigeria, a senior Army Officer told the Press that "what took place was only a change of leadership but our foreign policy will remain unchanged." In the two contexts, the term theoretically refers to two different things. While the former reflects foreign policy as an attitude, the latter presents it as an institutional position. A senior government official while advising a group of newly recruited Foreign Service Officers, told them "you must always remember that how you conduct our foreign policy abroad will determine how our country will be judged by other nations of the world and also your behaviour will reflect the type of foreign policy you project." Among the many meanings of the concept as used in this statement is

the impression that foreign policy is a kind of doctrine to be preached abroad and which demands a good example from the preacher. It also implies a mode of behaviour by diplomats abroad and gives the impression that diplomats are exclusively responsible for the nation's foreign policy, contrary to our argument below that a number of factors determine a country's foreign policy and diplomats make up one of the organs of government responsible for foreign policy. See chapters 7 and 9 on "The Machinery" and "The factors that affect the practice of foreign policy."

As a result of the various uses of the concept in speeches, it seems necessary in any study of the subject to provide a clear definition. But with the realisation that the scope of foreign policy is ever widening to include a great many activities of government and citizens of a nation across their territorial boundaries, thereby warranting variations in the usage of the term, it is considered by some scholars that to begin a study of foreign policy with an attempt at an acceptable definition of the nature of foreign policy would be to invite ridicule.<sup>1</sup> This appears to be so because there can be no generally acceptable definition of "foreign policy" since virtually every student of foreign policy would have a particular blend of the definition. Moreover, in a contemporary world of inter-dependence and conflict of interests, coupled with mutual mistrust, foreign policy is like a vehicle carrying various things or a shield covering all the external objectives of the state, be they of security, economic, political, cultural or ideological nature. Thus foreign policy becomes wide in scope and complex. This ever widening scope and complexity of

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1. Jones, Roy E., Analysing Foreign Policy - An introduction to some Conceptual Problems. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1970, p. 1.



foreign policy and international relations in general make the subject appear grandiose and difficult to define briefly. Despite this apparent difficulty if we agree that foreign policy is not among the subjects too generally comprehended to require definition, then it becomes necessary for us to provide a working definition.

What, therefore, is foreign policy? To begin with, there are only two words involved here, these are "foreign" and "policy". We will now try to explain them separately.

### THE CONCEPT OF "FOREIGN"

The word "foreign" according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, means among other things, "outside the country", "not of one's own land". "Foreign" is synonymous with the word "external". If one refers to something, say an event or goods as "foreign", it means that thing is taking place outside the country or going to or coming from outside one's own country. When, therefore, we think of "foreign policy", we are contemplating a policy that perhaps originates from country A but is directed towards activities in another country. It refers equally to a policy that originates from another country and directed towards country A. Again, when we think about "foreign policy" we are making a distinction between domestic or internal policy and the policy about things or events outside the country. Thus we can talk of "Nigeria's policy towards Zimbabwe", "the United States policy towards the Middle East crisis" or "the Soviet policy towards Cuba" etc. By these we are referring to the policy of a country about some events or activities of other countries and their outcome. For instance, if country X has a civil strife and another country Y decides to adopt a policy of involvement

in the internal strife of country X, then the policy of country Y is an external one. A second example is necessary. If a country, say Newingtonia offers a large market for the purchase of raw materials and the sale of industrial products while another country, called Portisbury, is in need of the large market and makes a policy of trade with Newingtonia, the policy of Portisbury in this respect is an external one, for it is about something outside its territory but within the territory of another country - Newingtonia. Similarly, if Portisbury is an industrialised country and possesses high technology needed by Newingtonia and the latter adopts a policy to acquire industrial know-how and technology from Portisbury, then the policy of Newingtonia is an external one, dealing with some other country - Portisbury. In a nutshell, a policy that cuts across the national territory, directed towards activities and things in another territory outside of its own is an external policy.

Perhaps in the interest of the newcomer to this discipline (not the political scientist to whom this is obvious or well known), specific illustration may be helpful in further explaining what is "foreign". Within Nigeria, any trading between two states (e.g. Imo and Niger or Bauchi and Bendel) or companies or private individuals will be classified as domestic or internal trade. But if such trading is carried on between a Nigerian State or Company or private citizen and another non-Nigerian outside the territorial borders of Nigeria, then it becomes foreign trade. Finally, a dispute between two communities or organisations or individuals in Nigeria is an internal dispute, usually resolved according to the existing law in the country. On the other hand, a dispute between a Nigerian

community or a Nigerian organisation or a Nigerian citizen and that of another country outside Nigeria, will be regarded as an external dispute. Even where such a dispute occurs within Nigeria or at its borders and one of the parties involved is the subject of another sovereign, the dispute will still be seen as having some external elements. Although it will be settled by the laws of Nigeria (i.e. the country where the dispute occurred), consideration will normally be given to the possible reaction of the other sovereign. A typical example occurred recently when Nigerian fishermen were attacked at its South-Eastern borders by Cameroon Patrol Troops. The Nigerian government immediately mobilized its forces ready for a combat operation. Negotiations started between the two governments and peace was later restored. Some might wonder if every private quarrel between two people of different nationalities would require the intervention of their governments. The fact is that if it becomes known that a foreign government (or its official) has intervened in the private dispute involving its citizen and say a Nigerian, it will be expected that the Nigerian government (or its official in that country) should take commensurate interest to ensure equitable resolution of the dispute.

In effect therefore, any issue that arises in another country or outside the territorial borders of Nigeria which has or is likely to have some effect on Nigeria or its citizens, will be regarded as a "foreign" issue and the decision and action taken by the Nigerian government in respect of such issue will be within the context of its foreign policy. Also an issue arising from within Nigeria which has or is likely to have some effect on



another country or organisation outside Nigeria, will to the extent of its effect be a foreign issue. For instance, in the recent expulsion of illegal aliens in Nigeria (1983), an action taken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the immediate effect was on the governments of the neighbouring countries who had to grapple with the problem of refugees. The implication had some unsavoury impact on the relations between Nigeria and the countries affected. Without referring to the unquantified effects of the expulsions on the global image of the country, the action created problems for Nigeria's Ministry of External Affairs who had to do more work in order to mend fences and to restore normal relations and confidence. In fact, many actions of a state, considered to be its internal matter, have often crossed the territorial borders to exert substantial implications on other countries, and rightly come within the ambit of foreign policy.

#### THE CONCEPT OF "POLICY"

What is "policy"? Among the common dictionary definitions of "policy" is that it is "a course of action" guided by interest and principle of governments, organisations or even individuals. Other definitions of the term by most policy analysts tend to focus on the behaviour of political authorities and government officials, thereby ignoring the varying types of policy and levels of formulation. An example is the view that "policy is the action and inaction of political authorities".<sup>2</sup> Jenkins was quick to point out that this definition is inadequate because "policy" is made in a variety of contexts and different contexts

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2. Jenkins, W.I., Policy Analysis - A Political and Organisational Perspective. Martin Robertson & Co. Ltd., London, 1978, p. 13.

produce different policies. There is also a growing recognition of the link between the policies of an individual and the organisation, as well as between them and those of the government. Moreover, since all modern political systems are pluralistic in the sense that many organs and agencies of both government and society like the cabinet, the parliament, the local governments, the pressure groups and the press, are usually involved at certain stages in the formulation and implementation of policy - some times as a necessary counterweight to the power of the government, policy can no longer be seen purely from a legislative aspect<sup>3</sup> or the bureaucratic politics perspective.<sup>4</sup> Although the level of government involvement or its legislation is a major contextual variant of any policy, other factors like the national economic context, military capability and national aspirations (general expectations of the people) may cause substantial changes in policies. As already noted, it is clear that policy is made at different levels of both government and society and different sectors of society too. The definition of "policy" will therefore vary according to the subject in a given context.

In an issue (1956) of the US Foreign Affairs Magazine the then Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Nitze (recently Reagan Administration's Chief Arms Control Negotiator) was quoted as giving two different meanings of the word "policy" as follows:

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3. Foreign policy is defined as "the legislative aspect of managing foreign relations" - Kenneth W. Thompson and Roy C. Macridis, "The comparative study of foreign policy" in Roy C. Macridis (ed.), Foreign Policy in World Politics. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1962, p. 18.

4. Jenkins, W.I., op. cit., pp. 32-33.

"In one sense, the action sense, it refers to the general guidelines which we believe should and will in fact govern our actions in various contingencies. In the other sense, the declaratory sense, it refers to policy statements which have as their aim political and psychological effect".<sup>5</sup>

Aldridge explained further this definition with reference to the United States' defence policy. He said the United States government has designed a general guideline for the development of a first strike nuclear capability, which in the event of a nuclear war against the Soviet Union would be used to dismember the USSR in a first strike, but in the bid to appease the many Americans opposed to the enormous expenditure on weapons development, the government parades such policies like "deterrence" and "detente" which it believed would elicit the desired political and psychological effects on the American public.<sup>6</sup> The above views raise an important observation that the speeches of political leaders are not always reliable indicators of the actual policy being pursued. It is clear from the definition that "policy" means a general guideline for action and from the second part of the definition, it is inferred that any "policy" must be discerned to achieve particular aims. Thus we could state from Paul Nitze's definition that a "policy" is the general guidelines for action aimed at achieving certain objectives. The type of objective would, however, vary with the type of policy and the ambitions of its makers.

A closer examination of the foregoing definitions will be salutary. It is apparent that the phrase "general guidelines" is more akin to "principles" than to "policy". In fact, "general

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5. Aldridge, Robert C., FIRST STRIKE! The Pentagon's Strategy for Nuclear War. Pluto Press, London, 1983, p. 26.

6. Ibid., p. 27.



guidelines" form only a part of policy and not the whole of it. In our view, "policy" has to do with the broad things to do, available means and possible direction to follow in order to attain definite goals. It consists of a series of decisions, the actual functions performed and the goals achieved while "general guidelines" consist of the set of principles that come into play at various stages in the attainment of the defined goals. Therefore, the scope of "policy" is broader and includes general guidelines or principles, the plan of things to be done or actions to be taken, the styles of procedure or methods of implementing a course of action, and the definite goals pursued. All these combine to form policy.

#### THE MEANING OF "FOREIGN POLICY"

We have tried to explain the two words "foreign" and "policy" separately in perhaps quite a simplistic fashion. The explanations no doubt will help one to understand our concept, while the question as to what is foreign policy could be explained further from the views of some eminent scholars in the discipline. According to Frankel,

"Foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others".<sup>7</sup>

He went further to explain the terms used in the definition. By "decision" is understood, he said, to be the determination of a course of action, following a more or less deliberate consideration of alternatives, while "action" is a thing done, a deed, or the process of acting or doing.<sup>8</sup> Noting that decision and action

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7. Frankel, Joseph, The Making of Foreign Policy - An Analysis of Decision-Making. Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p. 1.

8. Ibid.

require an agent and an environment, Frankel explained that "State decisions" are not made by states but on their behalf by individuals and groups of individuals who in most cases are the incumbents of official positions as determined by constitutions and legal systems, while the environment of foreign policy decision embraces the whole universe (i.e. limitless) but only restricted by the range of interests and scope of national capability of each state actor<sup>9</sup> at a given point in time.

A definition closely related to the above is provided by Wilkenfeld who wrote that:

"Foreign policy may be viewed as those official actions which sovereign states initiate for the purpose of altering or creating a condition outside their territorial sovereign boundaries".<sup>10</sup>

This definition is quite precise and revealing. It emphasises the word "official" to differentiate it from private views and actions on external matters. Thus the attitudes and actions of private citizens to external issues cannot be regarded as part of their country's foreign policy. For it is only when such actions are fed into the political system and the authorities recognise and accept them as deserving of government reaction that those attitudes and actions become foreign policy issues.

The next important inference from there is the fact that for any foreign policy to be meaningful, it must have definite purpose and target. For instance, in deciding to enter into any bilateral agreement with a country, the costs and benefits must be calculated in advance. Each party should be able to know the possibility of attaining those objectives that prompted its entry into the

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9. Ibid., pp. 2-9.

10. Wilkenfeld and Associates, Foreign Policy Behaviour. Sage Publications, Inc., London, 1980, p. 22.

agreement. This notion of "purpose" in foreign policy is very significant particularly for some countries that enter into various bilateral and multilateral agreements or open diplomatic missions just because the government at the time could afford, or thought it could afford, to maintain a given position. Wilkenfeld's definition therefore, makes it clear that the purpose of foreign policy must be to maintain or alter a condition in any external relationship. The rate at which some countries for example open diplomatic missions in friendly countries only to have them closed after a few years is indicative of the lack of purpose that characterises some foreign policy decisions and actions. The essence of "purpose" in foreign policy has equally been underlined by Wolfram when he defined foreign policy as:

"a co-ordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision makers seek to manipulate the international environment in order to achieve certain national objectives".<sup>11</sup>

The above definitions are clear and precise enough to facilitate an understanding of the meaning of foreign policy.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to draw attention to the distinction between the terms foreign policy, international relations and international politics, because they are sometimes used interchangeably, thereby giving rise to confusion and to beclouding of the phenomenon one tries to explain. Holsti noted that the distinction between the terms may be more academic than real,<sup>12</sup> but Rosenau held that the distinction is necessary in order

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11. Wolfram, F. Handrieder, "Compatibility and Consensus - A proposal for the Conceptual Linkage of External and Internal Dimensions of Foreign Policy", in American Political Science Review, vol. LXI, No. 4 (December, 1967), p. 971. Quoted in Idang, Gordon, op. cit., p. 5.

12. Holsti, K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (Third edn.), Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1977, p. 21.



to achieve clarity and knowledge of the boundary of the subject, which will facilitate valuable insights and findings.<sup>13</sup> If we are to accept the latter view, then a digression is necessary. From one perspective, we have seen foreign policy as the decisions and actions of a state towards other states (or the external environment). In addition to "decisions and actions" Holsti extended the definition to include "the conditions - usually domestic - under which those actions are formulated".<sup>14</sup> Both Frankel and Holsti give the impression that foreign policy is attributable to the state as distinct from non-state actors which could be said to be involved in international relations and politics. This is so because multi-national corporations and stateless organisations have no definable territory and no sovereign authority. Moreover, as the activities of non-state actors may be conditioned by the legislative actions of the sovereign within whose territory the actor is based, the latter's decisions and actions could be seen in the context of those of its sovereign host.

In the light of these, it is safer to restrict foreign policy to state-actors while the non-state actors could be better seen to engage in international relations and politics. Now, what is international relations? The term refers to all forms of interaction between actors and the members of different nation-states, be they government sponsored or not. The scope of international relations according to Holsti includes the analysis of foreign policies or political processes between nations, membership of international

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13. Rosenau, James N, International Politics and Foreign Policy. The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., New York, 1961, p. 3.

14. Holsti, op. cit., p. 21.

trade unions and associations, international trade, transportation, communications and other activities involving relations between separate organisations and societies.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, international politics is the set of actions, reactions and interactions among states in quest of higher advantage in the international system. Rosenau said it is concerned with the condition of the international system at any moment in time, the recurring pattern of balances and imbalance in the interaction of states, the formation of alliances and coalitions to achieve military or political objectives, and the development of supra-national organisations to influence changes in the international system.<sup>16</sup>

The distinction between the three terms could be briefly stated that, in foreign policy we look at the state's behaviour as a component unit of the international system; and in international relations we are concerned with the pattern of interaction or relationship per se (not impinging upon official government desire to achieve unilateral objectives) among governments, organisations or even individuals of different nationalities; while international politics is concerned with the pattern of power distribution and the factors which precipitate changes in the international system as a whole. Despite this distinction, it is not uncommon to find in books on foreign policy some explanations which tend to incorporate the three terms. The problem of differentiation is compounded by the differing orientations and interests of many scholars in the discipline.

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15. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

16. Rosenau, James N, op. cit., p. 3. See also the article in the same book by Fred A. Sondermann on "The Linkage between Foreign Policy and International Politics", pp. 8-17.

The definitions cited above have presented foreign policy from a mutual interest perspective of being about the course of interaction that usually exists and has to continue to exist between one country and the others. Some writers prefer to explain foreign policy from an ideological perspective while others define it in conflict terms. For instance, Hugo while examining the principles of British foreign policy wrote that foreign policy could be defined as:

"that general conception of national aspirations, interests and capacities which influence the government in the identification of disputes with other governments and in the choice of methods for the prevention, determination or limitation of such disputes".<sup>17</sup>

Explaining the definition, Hugo said British foreign policy is essentially concerned with disputes between British subjects, British organisations and British governmental agencies, on the one hand and those of foreign states on the other. He argued that if the world is free from disputes or there is an acceptable international authority to settle disputes enforceably, there would then be no need for Britain to maintain foreign relations or to make policy for their conduct. Hugo noted that his definition may seem a depressingly negative view of foreign policy because some would argue that the essence of contemporary international relations (bilateral and multilateral) and the attendant policies are to perpetuate, propagate and promote international co-operation and peace among nations but Hugo dismissed such views as mere "fine phrases" and "cynical conclusion"<sup>18</sup> in a world of conflict. This conflict approach to the explanation of foreign policy might have

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17. Hugo, Grant, Britain in Tomorrow's World; Principles of Foreign Policy. Chatto & Windus, London, 1969, p. 27.

18. Hugo, Grant, *ibid.*, p. 24.



been derived from a related notion of politics being about conflict and conflict resolution. In which case, the author assumed that the terms "foreign policy" and "international politics" can be used interchangeably. We have referred to the distinction between them earlier.

Closely related to this conflict perspective is the power resource approach<sup>19</sup> to the explanation of foreign policy. It examines, among other things, the multiplicity of conflicts arising from relations among nations and the role of power in the determination of such conflicts; the extent to which one actor controls through exercise of power the decisions and actions of another, and the degree of acquiescence of the less powerful and weak countries to the controlling influence of powerful actors. This approach assumes that disagreement and conflict are bound to arise in any relationship, that conflict is closely associated with the exercise of power which itself involves punishments or negative sanctions<sup>20</sup> and that in any relationship the actor with preponderant power has the tendency to seek to carry out its own will at a cost to the other partner. As a result, the making of policy for the conduct of foreign relations must be concerned with how to limit conflict, deter aggression or the threat of it and prevent possible punishments or negative sanctions. It presupposes therefore, that power base and power resources are vital ingredients of foreign policy, which could be relied upon to secure equitable resolution of a conflict in the event of any rupture in the relations between nations or used

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19. Korpi, Walter, "A Power Resource Approach to the Power controversy; the Pluralist-Elitist Debate Revisited". Swedish Institute for Social Research, University of Stockholm, 1983.

20. Ibid., p. 4.

as an influencer in any arrangement for the continuation of relations.

This is not to say that foreign policy is about power relationships but that dependable power resources are essential for the maintenance of equitable bilateral relations, negotiation of fair treaties and agreements and the limitation of sedulous exploitation. In sum, the effectiveness of a country's foreign policy depends to a great extent on its mobilisable power resources and the will to use them to promote, maintain and stabilize its external relations, not necessarily to advance the selfish objectives of its foreign policy as is usually said of exploitative relationships. However, the power resource-approach to the explanation of foreign policy is just another way of looking at the concept.

#### THE SCOPE OF FOREIGN POLICY

The scope of activities between nations in interaction has widened over the years and as such a precise definition of the policy for their conduct may have too narrow a scope. Some writers therefore opt for an explanation of the scope of activities involved as a better means of fostering an understanding of the subject and the appreciation of its essence. In his work on the "Issues of Irish Foreign Policy", Keatinge maintained that foreign policy is "composed of a range of issue areas, reflecting a variety of motivations, objectives and actions and which almost amount to a microcosm of the whole range of public policy".<sup>21</sup> He pointed out that the diversity of interests, attitudes and issues involved in foreign policy, its overlap with almost every activity

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21. Keatinge, Patrick, A Place among the Nations: Issues of Irish Foreign Policy. Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1978, p. 193.

of a modern state and the varying instruments (some of which are diabolical) used by states to further the ends of their policies, all combine to defy any near or simple definition. Both practitioners and scholars alike would no doubt appreciate the problem posed by the ever-widening scope of foreign policy, hence there is a shift from the search of a precise definition to the description of the scope of foreign policy. Keatinge quoted a former Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Patrick Hillary as describing foreign policy as:

"the sum of a whole series of actions and decisions at Government level in a wide variety of exchanges - political, trade and economic, social and cultural. These exchanges take place with a variety of other nations and they vary widely in their importance to us".<sup>22</sup>

This description is true of a practitioner, having imagined the variety of functions performed by diplomats in various parts of the globe and the flow of reports as well as directives in the foreign office. It highlights the almost limitless scope of activities that come under foreign policy, and like the others cited above, confines foreign policy to government, acting on behalf of the state. Hillary's definition makes it clear that social and cultural exchanges between nations are also aspects of foreign policy. These include education exchange programmes, the dissemination of information about one country in another, exchange of visits by citizens of different countries, the treatment and privileges accorded to such aliens, usually on a reciprocal basis etc. The extent to which these activities are carried on between countries in interaction varies and the degree

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22. Ibid.



of variation determines the importance of the relationship.

It is understandable from there that foreign policy is not just concerned with only maintaining mutual political relations or using such relations to bring pressure on friendly governments to support a particular line of action on certain international issues. The nation's economic and cultural objectives are usually reflected in its foreign policy.

It therefore suggests the necessity in foreign policy formulation to identify the economic and cultural needs of the country, to determine which countries are more likely to offer opportunities for those needs and to decide the plan or strategy for securing the opportunities. The countries that offer these opportunities at equitable exchange rates would become more important than the countries which do not offer the opportunities. If, therefore, a country is in need of industrialisation, it should consider as a matter of priority which countries will be willing to establish the required industries and start proposals with such countries. If this is done, the proposals, the responses and the eventual agreement and building of the industry, will form part of the foreign policy exchanges. In this case, as already noted, the country that offers the least opportunity for those needs will certainly go down in its importance to the needy country.

In a similar approach, Padelford and Lincoln explained that a state's foreign policy comprises (i) a general assessment of the state's economic, military and international position with relation to other states - neighbours, rivals, allies; (ii) an appraisal of its capabilities in advising bold action, caution, self-reliance, isolation, economic ties, or military or political alignments with

others; (iii) the broad principles of conduct which the state holds and its government advocates with respect to international affairs; (iv) specific objectives and national interests which the state seeks for itself in foreign relations and for the course of world affairs generally; and (v) the strategies, commitments and tactics which are undertaken for the realisation of its objectives and interests.<sup>23</sup> Similarly Ofoegbu stated that foreign policy deals with defence, security, international political relations and international economic relations, as well as cultural, scientific and technical co-operation between one actor in the international system and other actors in the international system.<sup>24</sup> It also includes, he noted, the set of objectives which direct, shape, regulate and govern these relations.<sup>25</sup>

#### A CONCEPTION OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

The question could still be asked as to what is the Nigerian conception of foreign policy or whether the above definitions and explanations conform with the notion of foreign policy in Nigeria. Basically, foreign policy as a concept is the same for every country but the scope and importance of the component issues vary with each country. This is so because the priorities and emphasis of countries differ according to their respective traditions, historical experiences, political institutions, geographical circumstances, economic necessities, national aspirations, power resources and the beliefs and values held by each state. All

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23. Padelford, Norman J. and Lincoln, George A., International Politics: Foundations of International Relations. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1954, p. 306.

24. It must be noted that the term "Actors in the International System" refers to states, international organisations, some types of individuals and corporate or legal entities within the environment of the system.

25. Ofoegbu, Ray, Foundation Course in International Relations for African Universities. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1980, pp. 3-6.

these combine to influence the ideas and proposals of those who formulate and implement policies in every country whether a democracy or a dictatorship, a developed or developing state. The same factors also condition the attitudes and thinking of the general public in that country to make them tolerate the actions or inactions of their policy makers. These conditioning factors in every country generate the idea of national interest and national objectives which become the framework for decisions and actions. Moreover, foreign policy decisions and actions in every country are targeted to the external environment, with the primary objective to secure the existence, security and well-being of the country and its people. Nevertheless, these underlying traditions, experiences, circumstances and beliefs, bring about variations in the foreign policy scope and priorities of the different countries, hence we are concerned here not with foreign policy as a general theme but with the foreign policy of Nigeria.

The subject matter of Nigerian foreign policy has both a general character and distinguishing peculiarities. Its scope and importance are wide and varied. In terms of scope, Nigerian foreign policy encompasses aspects of all Nigerian relations with foreign countries or governments and other actors in the international system. Indeed, it is not limited to the activities of the Ministry of External Affairs. To understand the scope of Nigeria's foreign policy requires cataloguing of the number of government departments and public agencies and organisations which have a section or unit that deals with international transactions or matters of international affairs. There has been no such compilation and it is not part of our task here to compile one. However, a look into the Business



Directory of the country shows thousands of companies and firms involved in imports and exports with foreign countries. Also the archives of the Passport Office in Lagos from 1970 to 1980 reveal the presence of Nigerians, many of whom are students, in all parts of the world. The government does not take for granted that these people are engaged in private endeavours, rather every possible effort is made to protect and provide for them. For example, when former President Shehu Shagari addressed in 1981 the newly appointed Ambassadors, he charged them, as part of their primary responsibility with protecting the interests of Nigerian students, businessmen and visitors in the countries of their deployment.<sup>26</sup> Although these Nigerians abroad may not realise the interest of government in their wellbeing and as such refuse to report their presence to the Nigerian Mission in that country, until perhaps they encounter serious difficulties or problems with some persons or law enforcement authority in that country, the fact remains that their stay, safety and activities in a foreign land constitute a vital aspect of the objectives of Nigerian foreign policy.

We have already stated that foreign policy is not the exclusive business of the Ministry of External Affairs. Other departments of government and public organisations are involved at different levels and in various ways in the formulation and administration of foreign policy. For instance, in determining the criteria for admitting foreigners into the country, how long they may stay and under certain circumstances how they shall be expelled, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is directly taking decisions and actions which

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26. From a discussion with one of the Ambassadors present at the occasion.

involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state (Nigeria) and others. Since 1980 the Ministry of Internal Affairs has been responsible for the issuance, refusal or withdrawal of passports to Nigerians who travel abroad. The activities of these Nigerian citizens abroad, who travel with the authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, affect Nigeria's image abroad and its relations with other countries. We can include the state governments who award scholarships to their indigenes to study abroad, send economic delegations abroad to negotiate joint ventures, and award contracts to foreign firms. These actions of state governments are undoubtedly in the realm of "external affairs", which constitutionally is in the portfolio of the Federal Government. We are not pointing out any infraction of the constitution for there are or should be established procedures for states in a federation to realise their external interests within a co-ordinated federal framework, but experience has shown that on several occasions and in various countries, Nigerian state delegations have arrived in a country without advance notification having been received by the Nigerian Embassy in that country. It is only when the host-officials wish to ascertain the identity of the visiting delegation that a telephone call will be made to the Nigerian Embassy to intimate the arrival of such a delegation.

Many other departments of government and public agencies are also involved in decisions and actions on matters of External Affairs. The Ministry of Aviation takes an active part in devising and negotiating Air-Services Agreements with various countries. The Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) undertakes several contract arrangements with foreign countries and agencies. The

Central Bank of Nigeria and Federal Ministry of Finance formulate and implement policies on the remittance of funds abroad in order to honour the obligations of government and citizens of Nigeria. A further survey will reveal the extent of overlapping of foreign policy and the ever-widening scope as well as the involvement in its making of virtually every government department or public agency. Perhaps we could recall the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture spearheading the discussion and negotiation about the exclusion from the Montreal Olympics of New Zealand for having sporting links with apartheid South Africa.

Similarly, professional associations like the Nigerian Medical Association, the Nigerian Bar Association etc. who belong to the World Medical and Bar Associations, attend international conferences and participate in discussions and negotiations to adopt resolutions of importance. At the World Medical Association Conference held in Lisbon, Portugal in April 1982, which this researcher attended as the diplomatic representative from the Nigerian Embassy, the Nigerian Medical Association delegates led the criticism against the apartheid policy of the South African government, accused the South African Medical Association of collaborating with that government in its apartheid policy and therefore urged other members to vote against the admission into the World Body of the South African Medical Association. All this goes to show (contrary to the impression held by many, including a senior official of one of the Federal Ministries who asserted during a discussion that foreign policy is the business of the Ministry of External Affairs) that it goes beyond the functions of one Ministry or department of government.



If, however, we must narrow the scope to provide a precise definition of the concept within the Nigerian context, one way of arriving at such will be by identifying the unique features of Nigerian foreign policy. It seems appropriate to describe the Nigerian foreign policy as altruistic. Its outstanding features have been reflected thus:

"Our policy is one of friendship with all the nations of the world. We do not wish to identify ourselves as a matter of routine with the policies of any particular country or group of countries. We will continue to base our attitude to the problems of the world on an unflinching respect for truth and the desire to find out and strive to support what is right. It is our determination in all our dealings within our own country and with the outside world that we uphold the dignity of man everywhere. We shall endeavour with every means at our command to make certain that in our own country the freedom which we have and which we so dearly cherish shall extend to all who are still under the domination of other people.<sup>27</sup>

It is thus clear that Nigeria maintains a foreign policy of "live and let live", which is a feature of altruism. It values friendship with every country without discrimination and believes in the dictum that "if the right hand washes the left and the left hand washes the right, the two hands would become cleaner". It advocates a common endeavour by "all nations, big or small, to really preserve world peace by doing everything they can to stop armed conflict".<sup>28</sup> It emphasises the need for a common striving for a just world economic order designed to improve opportunities for those countries who are poor and to raise the living standards of all peoples of the world. A vital element of the foreign policy is to ensure the

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27. Mr. Prime Minister, a selection of speeches made by Alhaji the Rt. Hon. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1964, p. 58.

28. Ibid., p. 60.

survival and maintenance of relationships through genuine co-operation and collaboration. Unlike the capitalist and communist foreign policies, the Nigerian foreign policy is neither imperialistic nor hegemonistic. It is not geared to exploit the political and economic weaknesses of other friendly countries. It is not designed to undermine foreign governments either directly or indirectly through subversive elements or any other variety or combination of carrot and stick. It is devoid of ideological rivalry and military alignment. It is not hypocritical in the sense of covertly supporting a party in conflict while openly calling on both parties to make peace. These are the standards by which a country's foreign policy can be judged as being ideal or not. The absence of these pretensions in the Nigerian foreign policy make it ideal. We can illustrate the ideal-type policy further by pointing to the fact that Nigeria is perhaps the only country in the world today that gives aid and various kinds of assistance to other countries without the least string being attached. However, these may be said to be moralistic and it may be argued that a foreign policy should not be based on morality. Whatever may be the merit of such argument, there is perhaps no doubt that Nigerian foreign policy has been unequivocal in articulation and consistent in objective, despite the absence of imperialist motives and pretensions. Moreover, it has all the time had the popular support of the Nigerian public and the various governments (civilian and military) and it has made significant successes in the world so far, due to the conviction that the ideals are noble, just and immutable.

The foreign policy of Nigeria should therefore be conceived in terms of those ideals of general relevance and validity which Nigerians believe are essential for the advancement of the independence, security and well-being of their country, their continent and the world. At this juncture, one easily recalls the statements of some Nigerian leaders who conceive the destiny of their country to be inextricably linked with the destiny of all peoples of African descent as well as the other oppressed peoples in the world. In a speech, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (first President of Nigeria) warned that Africa has emerged at a critical juncture in world politics and as experience of the last two world wars has shown, if sufficient wisdom is not employed, Africa could be used for the third time and made a battle ground in the war of the elephants. He drew attention to the fact that in the first and second world wars, "Africa played a leading role not only as supplier of men, materials and money, but as a theatre of war" and African peoples were inveigled into participating in the destruction of Kaiserism and Hitlerism in order that the world should be made safe for democracy. Now, he said, "the peoples of Africa are being told again that it is necessary in the interest of peace and the preservation of Christianity, that they should be ready to fight the Soviet Union, which the war buglers allege is aiming at world domination."<sup>29</sup> Stressing that in Nigeria, we face the inescapable reality that the blood of our sons has been shed in two world wars in vain, Zik said, "Peace is indivisible.

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29. Zik, A selection from the speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe, op. cit., p. 62.



One half of the world cannot enjoy peace while the other half lives in the throes of war."<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, foreign policy statements by other Nigerian leaders have reflected the same concern for peace and order in Africa and the world. Thus, Prime Minister Balewa underlined that:

"Next to safeguarding and promoting the interests of the Federation and its citizens, the Federal Government is committed to preservation of peace and tranquility in Africa and the world, without which the whole idea of independence is meaningless and human progress will be hampered." <sup>31</sup>

On another occasion he also said:

"We in Nigeria fully realise that mutual co-operation between nations for the preservation of peace and the development and progress of society is inevitable. Hence Nigeria's cardinal policy is one of friendship with all nations of the world and closer associations of peoples at all levels." <sup>32</sup>

The foreign policy of Nigeria, therefore, could be seen not in terms of the actual power possessed by the country and its readiness to apply such for coercion and exploitation of others; or in terms of the magnitude of the economic and military resources it commands relative to another country or group of countries; nor in its capacity to establish hegemony continentally or globally, but in the terms of the degree of peaceful and mutually beneficial relations between it and other actors in the international system. Thus Nigerian foreign policy can be defined as: the general guidelines and plans of action which the state adopts for the conduct of relations with other

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30. Ibid., p. 63.

31. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., p. 63

32. Ibid., pp. 62 and 84.

actors in order to enhance co-operation and collaboration in the attainment of certain national and international objectives.

The components of this definition are self-explanatory and need not take our time here. Nevertheless, it must be stated that the objectives of Nigerian foreign policy described here as "national and international objectives" could be classified into three parts. First, the interests of the nation-state which are to ensure the security and independence of Nigeria as well as the welfare of its citizens by encouraging peaceful relationship and mutual co-operation that will facilitate collaboration in the attainment of those ends, including economic growth, educational advancement, scientific and technological development; Second, the continental interest, manifested in the determination to maintain close co-operation with the other African states with the aim of fostering better understanding and a realisation of identity of interest among them. The attainment of such aim, it is believed, would promote solidarity and advertise the importance of Africa in world affairs. Third, the global interest which is to further the cause of world peace and co-operation through urging universal respect for freedom, equality and justice, while at the same time refraining from alignment with any military bloc in world politics, as such encourages antagonistic relationship and rivalry. Other components of the definition which may need explanation include "general guidelines" which we will discuss in detail in a subsequent chapter dealing with the principles of Nigerian foreign policy, while the "plan of action" could be understood from the activities of the "foreign policy-making machinery to be examined in chapter seven. It must be reiterated

that the purpose of formulating both "general guidelines" and "plans of action" is to achieve definite objectives, which as already stated, are part of the policy.

To appreciate this conception of foreign policy is to admit that in the global field of human relations, all is relative to one's needs, position, dangers, objectives and goals. These determine the priority of each actor. Although the cliché exists that foreign policy is founded on egocentricity and therefore "must be fundamentally self-seeking to be politically and logically tenable",<sup>33</sup> it would be misleading to assume that the purpose of foreign policy is simply the pursuit of the selfish interests of the state. Foreign policy is not bound to be self-seeking all the time, for certain vital national goals can be better attained through mutual interdependence and co-operation. Moreover, since the needs, positions and goals of states vary in relation to one another and in an era of greater awareness, no state will tolerate being placed in a disadvantageous position for too long. Continuous and uninhibited display of selfish interest could mar relations between nations and foreign policy will be meaningless if it ruptures existing relations or fails to meet the acceptance of the other actors. It is only when a policy is designed to further mutual co-operation and promote reciprocal advantages that it becomes acceptable and durable. Reciprocity is the basis of any reasonable relationship and if it does not exist, the relationship will not endure and the policy governing it is short-sighted.

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33. Vital, David, The Making of British Foreign Policy. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1966, pp. 18-19.



Thus, while foreign policy must be calculated to advance and defend the realisation of the external objectives of the state, whatever that might be to each state, it must also maintain and advance the relationship of the states concerned for it to be reasonable and lasting. A policy that is fundamentally self-seeking usually ignores the relative needs and expectations of the others with which it is in interaction. The resultant effect will be conflict which will sometimes break up existing relations or create stress and tension in the relationship. Such a policy is founded on error and likely to destroy itself. A policy that does not secure and maintain order in the system while advancing the objectives of the state in whose name it is founded may be judged a failure; one which does is successful. This is the standard by which a policy can be judged.

## CHAPTER 4

PRINCIPLES OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Having tried in the preceding chapter to explain the meaning of the concept of foreign policy and in particular Nigerian foreign policy, some questions immediately emerge. Are there any principles of Nigerian foreign policy? If so, what are they? In effect, this chapter will be concerned with the identification and explanation of the principles that guide the formulation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy. Just as we argued earlier that every nation state has a foreign policy, so also we would argue and uphold here that every foreign policy has some theoretical bases. These are those perhaps common but indispensable rationale and assumptions for most decisions and actions of the country in external affairs. If the bases of policy have not been explicitly organised and articulated – as perhaps in the case of Nigeria – it might be assumed that the principles of foreign policy are non-existent or questionable. Sometimes the style and direction of policy might be mistaken for principles and at other times the idea of principle is ignored in the examination of foreign policy.

There is also apparent overlap in scope between "principles", "objectives" and "goals" of foreign policy. As a result of this overlap, there is the tendency to use the terms synonymously. It is possible to distinguish the three terms.

The Goal

The goal of a policy is the ultimate aim/object to be realised. Few would dispute, for instance, that one of the goals of all

national policies is to secure the survival of the nation. Others include the welfare of the citizens and the economic wellbeing of the country. A goal is the sum of objectives. It is the end point which, when attained, consummates the endeavours. For example, one of the goals of Nigeria's economic policy is to build "a united, strong and self-reliant nation".<sup>1</sup> This embraces the objectives of its "green revolution", trading activities, industrialisation etc. Similarly when the Nigerian government declared its commitment to the total liberation of all oppressed black people in Africa, the goal is to secure the independence of all African countries from colonial and apartheid regimes.<sup>2</sup> In pursuit of the same goal, the Federal Military Government took the decision to recognise the MPLA Government of Angola (see chapter 8 (11b)). In the decision to send Nigerian peace-keeping troops to Chad Republic, the goal was to maintain political stability in the region. This includes stability in Nigeria, for violence in a neighbouring African country is considered a possible source of threat to Nigeria. There are a number of other goals.<sup>3</sup> Based on item one of its foreign policy objectives below, one can say that one of the primary

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1. The Four Year National Development Plan 1970-74, Federal Ministry of Information Lagos, 1970.
  2. Obasanjo, Olusegun, A March of Progress - Collected Speeches of General Olusegun Obasanjo. Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1980, p. 49.
  3. For a classification of the goals of foreign policy see (a) Northedge, F.A., The International Political System, Faber, London, 1976, pp. 194-7; (b) Legg, R.K. and Morrison, J.F., Politics and the International System: An Introduction. Harper & Row, New York, 1971, pp. 143-4; (c) Wolfers, Arnold, Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1962, pp. 73-9.



goals and indeed the most vital goal of Nigeria is the preservation of its territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty as well as the security and wellbeing of the citizens wherever they may be. In effect national survival is a primary goal of the country. These goals can be achieved incrementally through attaining relevant objectives. Perhaps we can describe a goal as the "What" of foreign policy. It is only when goals are clearly identified that the objectives can properly be matched to particular goals. Similarly, if goals are clearly defined, then decisions and actions will be better appreciated and applied towards a given target.

#### The Objective

The objective of a policy is that which if achieved, adds to the realisation of the goal. In other words, objectives are the other points or things that variously are not the goal but part of it. Collectively, they form the goal. It can be understood from the examples above that the objectives of Nigeria's African policy include encouraging nationalist leaders in dependent African countries to struggle for their independence. In the Angolan case, the recognition of the MPLA Government was an objective of policy while the goal as already noted, is to ensure the independence of Angola (as part of the total independence of Africa) and political stability in that region, in the long run. Similarly, in the case of Chad, part of the objectives include preventing the involvement of extra-African military force and to encourage the Chadian leaders to resolve their differences amicably. These are not the ultimate aim or goal, as indicated above. They

are, of course, closely related because the objectives exist to attain the goal but to make sure that each objective is achieved, it must be clearly distinguished from both goal and principle.

Broadly, the objectives of Nigerian foreign policy have been declared time and again by various Nigerian leaders. There has been a number of reviews of these objectives. The last review exercise was done in 1976. It outlined the objectives of the country in foreign policy as follows:

- (i) the defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;
- (ii) the creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world, which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time fostering national self-reliance and rapid economic development;
- (iii) the promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world;
- (iv) the promotion and defence of justice and respect for human dignity, especially the dignity of the black man; and
- (v) the defence and promotion of world peace.<sup>4</sup>

These are broad objectives and are not likely to offer definite guidelines to the practitioner when confronted with several global issues like the Arms control and disarmament, the use of outer space and seabed, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the East-West rivalry or an event like the British-Argentine claims over the Falkland Islands. Anyone involved in the consideration of these issues may have difficulty relating them

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4. Obasanjo, O., A March of Progress, Collected speeches of General Olusegun Obasanjo, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1979, p. 49.

to the declared objectives of government in external affairs. The same type of difficulty may be encountered in negotiating a bilateral commercial agreement, determining what Nigerian interest is involved in particular activities of a foreign government, or in making decisions to vote one way or the other on certain international issues. It is contended that the objectives would be more meaningful if redefined in the simplest and most generally valid terms that can be used for assessment and practical decisions on particular problems that confront Nigeria's foreign policy practitioners. One of the ways of lessening the difficulty is to distinguish between objectives and the essential guidelines (principles) of foreign policy.

#### The Meaning of Principles

By "principles" we mean the motive force or the underlying guidelines/bases of all foreign policy decisions and actions. As a matter of fact, principles guide the realisation of objectives and goals of policy. They also form the set of reasons and justifications for the behaviour of a state. It would be ludicrous for a state to involve itself in say a war or peace settlement at some cost to its citizens without having substantive reasons for doing so. The government that acts without reasonable cause and plan will become unpopular and would likely face a revolt from its citizens. For every policy, there must be the underlying reason and conviction that make it acceptable to the people and for which they give support by allowing the use of their human and material resources for its pursuit. Such underlying reasons and convictions constitute the motive force or principles of foreign policy. Generally "principles" provide the rationale or



explain the "Why?" of foreign policy. To the bureaucrat, this means the laid-down guidelines or directives which define what should be done in order to achieve certain objectives or goal. Thus, principles of foreign policy constitute a component part of the purposive elements that regulate the external behaviour of an actor in the international system.

To many politicians and statesmen, "national interest" is the shorthand expression for principles of foreign policy. For instance, the US invasions of Cambodia (Vietnam) and Grenada (1984) as well as similar Soviet invasions of Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan, which were in other terms cases of violation of the sovereign and territorial rights of these states, were defended on grounds of "national interest." Nigeria's failure to intervene in the arrangements to establish foreign bases for military operations and missile trials in neighbouring African countries,<sup>5</sup> a failure due to military weakness, is rationalised on the basis of national interest.<sup>6</sup> While answering a question from reporters on what principle would guide Nigeria's foreign policy under the new military regime, the then (1975) newly appointed Commissioner for External Affairs, Joe Garba, said "... we must always see to it that in our policy Nigeria's interests would be dominant." To elucidate the point, he said the government will be guided by the

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5. Imobighe, T.A., "African States and Defence Agreements with Foreign Powers: The negation of Non-Alignment" in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 7, nos. 1 and 2, 1981,

6. Brigadier Alabi Isama (Rtd.) in an address to foreign service officers on Induction course 1978, said that the government has watched with concern the increasing foreign military presence in Africa but is guided by the advice that to prevent such foreign bases will ultimately involve intervention in the internal affairs of those African countries and will be misconstrued as exhibition of territorial ambition - a point which the Imperialists will use contrary to our objectives in external affairs, to consolidate their domination of Africa in the guise of providing military assistance.

principle of national interest in its foreign policy. Similarly, when the British Government decided to get involved in the Suez crisis of 1956, the decision was justified on the grounds of "national interest".<sup>7</sup> Again in 1982 the British Government went to war to defend the Falkland Islands against Argentina for reasons of national interest but any close observer of British politics knows the reasons were much more than the British national interest alone. These examples go to show that, to some people, all the principles that guide a country's policy in external affairs – be they on economic, defence, technical, ideological or cultural issues – are classified as "national interest". This makes the concept ambiguous and creates problems of interpretation and application of appropriate principles to particular issues. The more vague a principle is the more the difficulty of its application. As a matter of fact, practical decisions cannot be taken on the basis of sentiments or vaguely worded principles. In taking any foreign policy decision or action, the basic consideration should be on the relevance of such to specific principles. It is therefore our contention that the principles that guide decisions and actions in external affairs should be clearly defined in simple terms. Principles too should be distinguished from the objectives whose realisation they are supposed to guide.

#### Classification of Principles

The principles of Nigerian foreign policy have not been spelt out like the objectives which virtually every Nigerian Head of State has tried to restate. However, the principles can be

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7. Hugo, Grant, Britain in Tomorrow's World: The Principles of Foreign Policy. Chatto & Windus, London, 1969, pp. 94-96.

deduced from some statements and actions of the Nigerian government as well as the declared objectives of its foreign policy. Accordingly we can identify the principles of Nigeria's foreign policy as follows:

1. National protection.
2. National economic growth.
3. Cultural identity.
4. National aspiration.
5. African security and co-operation.
6. Non-alignment.
7. Promoting international peace and co-operation.

We will endeavour here to explain in the simplest terms possible the meaning of these principles that guide the formulation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy.

#### NATIONAL PROTECTION

The principle of national protection is concerned first and foremost about the security and wellbeing of the state, its citizens and resources. According to an External Affairs Officer, the principle demands the protection and promotion of the country's national interests. For practical purposes, we need to explain the component parts of this expression. By "protection" it implies the responsibility and obligation of every citizen, especially the official incumbents of relevant posts, to make sure that the country's valued possessions, needs, desires and expectations are guarded jealously to prevent violation, exploitation, misuse or misdirection. It means a deliberate effort to defend and protect the territory, the resources, the government, the citizens and their property wherever they may be and under any circumstance. For



example, if it is known that a Nigerian citizen or company or ship or aircraft has been detained in a foreign country for some alleged offences, the government of Nigeria or its representative is bound to see not only that the accused receives fair trial but also to secure the release and repatriation, if possible, of such citizen, company, ship or aircraft. Instances abound<sup>8</sup> of Nigerians detained in foreign countries for months and when the Nigerian Embassy is asked what it has done to safeguard such persons, the reply would be that a report has been sent to Lagos on the matter and the Embassy is waiting for directives as to what to do. Such "waiting" is due to lack of comprehension of the meaning and scope of the duties and obligations involved in "protecting the national interest". Without trying to put the blame squarely on Nigerian Missions, the problem arises from the vagueness of the directive principles of the country's foreign policy. Such vagueness militates against initiative and prompt action on matters that demand them.

If the principle of "protecting the national interest" is clearly understood, then the Nigerian Embassy/High Commission in a country will not wait for directives from Lagos but it would invoke this principle as a basis for taking every necessary measure to secure the release of such detainees. This principle broadly

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8. These include students that have immigration problems in USA, UK, Italy and Greece. There are also Nigerians reportedly denied licenses/permits to do business or work in countries whose nationals do business and work in Nigeria. In Greece a Nigerian was wrongly arrested for alleged drug offence and when it was reported to the Embassy, there was divided opinion between those who felt that consular assistance should not be extended to him because of the mere mention of drug offence and those who felt strongly that the allegation was influenced by prejudice. The latter was proved correct in the end. From interview.

applies to defending Nigeria and everything Nigerian - be it a Nigerian industry, artifact, house, culture, value system or the national flag. It includes liaison with the appropriate authority and taking any steps to prevent any attempt to cause injury to the territory or citizen of Nigeria.

By "promotion" of national interests, is meant the encouragement and support given towards achieving the needs, desires and expectations of the government and people of Nigeria. It includes any activity or duty performed and indeed all efforts made to realise or attain desirable objectives that are beneficial to the country. Such effort could be made individually or collectively but must be aimed at achieving or enhancing the achievement of definite benefits for the country. The promotion of national interest is not limited to government projects. Rather it extends to assisting and encouraging Nigerian private business people abroad like industrialists, traders, students and tourists. It also includes encouraging foreign entrepreneurs to invest in Nigeria and to do business with Nigerians. Others include advertising Nigerian products, and made in Nigeria goods and upholding a good image for the country abroad. By "national interest" we mean the valuable possessions, needs, desires and expectations of the country and its citizens. A country's valuable possessions include its territory, citizens, sovereignty economy and other endowments. The needs of a country are many and varied. So are the desires and expectations. They include as of necessity, the protection of these possessions and the creation of conducive environment for their existence and growth. In a nutshell, national interest is the sum of a country's objectives and goals.

From the above explanations, the meaning of the principle of national protection becomes perhaps clear and its essence apparent. The principle emphasises that the territory, the citizens and their institutions are vital to the existence of a state and must be protected. It affirms that the essence of government is to defend the existence and promote the wellbeing of these vital elements of the state. Hence, officials and representatives of the government must recognise this principle as a guide in all their decisions and actions. This principle is underlined by the dictum that "the instinct of self-preservation is natural and inherent in human activities and relationships." Therefore, every person or group of persons or state owes itself a natural obligation and responsibility to ensure its own survival. For a state's other objectives and goals can only be or hope to be realised if that state exists. A non-existing state has neither objectives nor goals. This confirms our view here that the primary purpose of any national policy is and must be, among other things, to safeguard the nation-state. In other words, the non-negotiable interests (core goals) of a country are its security and wellbeing.<sup>9</sup>

The government acting on behalf of the state has the inescapable responsibility to protect the physical territory and its natural resources, the citizens and their property, and the sovereign rights of the state. In formulating external policy, government is guided by the rule to protect the state and its possessions against external forces.

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9. Northedge, F.S., op. cit., pp. 194-5.



It was thus the principle of national protection that led Prime Minister Balewa in the early sixties to reject the proposal by the Casablanca bloc to forge African unity through political union of the various states in Africa.<sup>10</sup> The Balewa government was not prepared to surrender the country's independence and security in the hands of radical African leaders. The principle of national protection is a fundamental and immutable guide in making decisions on external affairs. This is so because of Nigeria's past experiences of external conquest and exploitation; the nature of the international environment especially the tendency for external interference, aggression or conflict; and the amazing growth of Nigerian population living and working/studying in many countries all over the world. Some of these, for various reasons ranging from colour prejudices or nationality differences to serious offences, have become victims at the hands of their host authorities. If the international environment were without conflict, there would have been no such principle or at least there would have been less emphasis on the need for protection. But because of international rivalry, exploitation, conflict and aggression, the rule has become ordained for every country to defend itself against external aggression. How this defence is maintained by each country is a matter of method and does not change the meaning and essence of the principle. A country can choose to defend itself by developing weapons of mass destruction. Another can do so by allying itself with a more powerful country. Yet another can do the same, by adopting such external policies likely to create favourable

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10. Balewa, A.R., Mr. Prime Minister; A selection of speeches made by Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1964, pp. 94-95.

conditions abroad that would minimise the chances for external aggression or that would win for it more friends than enemies. Whatever method a country chooses is based on this principle of national protection.

Many Nigerian leaders have underlined the principle of national protection as an essential guideline for the realisation of the country's vital national interests. Writing on Nigeria's external affairs, Chief Awolowo drew attention to the point that "one of the purposes for which a state is ordained is the protection of its citizens against external aggressions" and that "it is the primary obligation of the state to cater for and promote the welfare of its peoples to the end that they may live a full and happy life".<sup>11</sup> Prime Minister Balewa also underlined this principle when he told the House of Representatives:

"In formulating its policy for the conduct of foreign affairs, the federal government recognises that its primary duty is to safeguard and promote the interests of the federation and its citizens".<sup>12</sup>

In the decision to establish diplomatic missions in the early sixties, the Balewa government gave priority to countries in which there were many Nigerians.<sup>13</sup> This was in consideration of affording them possible protection and assistance. The concern for the security and welfare of Nigeria and its people remained a major consideration of foreign policy under the military regime. Receiving students and faculty members of the US War College who visited Nigeria in March 1966, General Ironsi told them that Nigeria would

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11. Awolowo, O., The Peoples Republic. Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1968, p. 330.

12. Balewa, A.T., in Claude S. Philips Jr., The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy. North Western University Press, 1964. p. 40.

13. Balewa, A.T., Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., pp. 35, 37.

maintain the friendliest of relations with all countries that recognise the corporate existence of Nigeria and respect her sovereignty.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, General Gowon acted on the basis of the principle of national protection in his government's enhancement of relations with Nigeria's immediate neighbours. During the civil war, the government successfully got these countries, namely Cameroons, Chad, Dahomey, Niger and Togo etc. to support the Federal Government against the dismemberment of Nigeria. The government is thus aware that the security of Nigeria is tied to those of its neighbours and so declared the neighbours its priority area of diplomacy.<sup>15</sup> The Adedeji Review Report (June 1976) placed the principle of national protection as the first and foremost guide to the country's foreign policy. In a bid to explain the principle, the former Commissioner for External Affairs, Major General Adefope stated that:

"The promotion of the material, psychological and moral welfare of our people, which is the central purpose of government, calls for the maintenance of national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria. This objective forms a cardinal principle of both our domestic and foreign policies." <sup>16</sup>

We have noted also President Shagari's advice to his principal envoys to give special attention to the protection and welfare of Nigerians in their host countries. All these illustrate that this principle has been in existence, recognised by all Nigerian leaders and reflected in decisions on external affairs.

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14. West Africa, March 24, 1966, p. 359.

15. Aluko, O., The Foreign Policies of African States, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977, pp. 263-266.

16. An address at the 17th Induction Course for newly recruited foreign service officers, Lagos, 1979.



## NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

The principal of national economic growth guides decisions and actions towards the realisation of the country's economic objectives. It demands a consistent and co-ordinated effort for the preservation of the economic base of the country; the attainment of self-sufficiency in food production; the promotion of investments, scientific/technical co-operation and trade. It also demands a constant check against foreign economic exploitation. Few attempts have been made recently to explain the basis of Nigeria's economic policy abroad. In the second half of 1978, public opinion in Nigeria rose to question government's foreign policy objectives and measures. There was in particular alleged "neglect of economic consideration in the formulation and execution of our foreign policy".<sup>17</sup> This caused concern in some government quarters especially in the Ministry of External Affairs where an attempt was made to explain the economic considerations of the government in foreign policy. The Commissioner for External Affairs, Major-General Adefope in a reply circulated to the critics of Nigeria's foreign economic policy said:

"On the point made in your letter about the lack of economic consideration in formulation and execution of our foreign policy, I can agree with you that all countries seek, first and foremost, to promote their economic interests in the formulation and conduct of their foreign policy objectives. I also agree with you entirely that the appropriate emphasis must be placed on economic considerations in the conduct of our foreign relations. But I would like to add that we have been doing this. What has not been happening is that sufficient publicity has not been given to this aspect of our work." <sup>18</sup>

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17. A letter to the Commissioner for External Affairs from A.A. Akwesa & Company, Onitsha, Nigeria, July 22, 1978.

18. Adefope, H.E.O. (Commissioner) in reply to "Alleged selective application of our foreign policy measures". Ministry of External Affairs, Lagos, October 1978.

It explained that government activities in the economic sphere have been confined mainly to providing the international infra-structural arrangements which make international business possible. For example, he said, no one cares to know how it is that Nigeria Airways planes can fly to a number of countries in the world and pick up cargo or passengers; how the flow of the River Niger, on which the lives of millions of Nigerians depend, is maintained uninterrupted by the Riverine States; why are the efforts being made to link our country with all neighbouring states with a network of first-class roads as for instance it is now possible to drive from Lagos to Accra, Kano to Naimy/Njamina, on a relatively good road; how it is possible to attract foreign experts to participate in our development programmes etc. The Ministry said "much work goes on behind the scenes to make these things possible and in much of the work, the essential motive is to promote business intercourse with the outside world in the interest of our nation as a whole but particularly in the interest of our business community to which, I believe, your goodselves belong".<sup>19</sup>

"... our role in the conception of ECOWAS, the Chad Basin Commission, River Niger Commission, our role in monitoring activities in the oil world which enables us to sell our oil in time and at a good price etc. are all motivated by economic considerations".<sup>20</sup>

A year later (1979) the Director of International Economic Co-operation in the Ministry of External Affairs reaffirmed that national economic considerations are an integral part of Nigeria's foreign policy. He illustrated the view by reference to the

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19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

role of his Department which is the co-ordination of all bilateral economic relations between Nigeria and all other countries of the world and between Nigeria and international economic and financial organisations of which Nigeria is a member.<sup>21</sup> In addition to the Department of International Economic Co-operation in the Ministry of External Affairs, there are the Ministries of Economic Development (which in the Second Republic was renamed National Planning), Commerce and Industry, each having an International Division with all co-operating in the formulation of both guidelines and foreign economic policy. There is also in every Nigerian Embassy/High Commission a section that deals with economic matters, albeit seeks to promote economic co-operation between Nigeria and the Mission's host country. The setting-up and financing of these institutional organs reflect government's considerations and commitment to national economic growth. Although the expected rate of economic growth is not yet attained it does not mean the absence of guidelines or economic considerations in the country's foreign policy. A few examples of government's economic activities abroad will help to illustrate the application of the principle of national economic growth in the conduct of foreign policy.

#### BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

An important aspect of Nigeria's foreign policy that is directly influenced by this principle of national economic growth is the conduct of bilateral economic relations. The need for rapid economic development through co-operation encourages the

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21. Ijewere, G.O. (Dr.), "The Role of the Department of International Economic Co-operation, Ministry of External Affairs", lecture, Induction Course, Lagos, June 1979.



Government to enter into bilateral agreements on economic, scientific and technical co-operation between Nigeria and several countries. Air Services and Trade Agreements have also been concluded with many countries, as the table below shows.

Table 1

Some Economic and Technical Agreements reached  
by Nigeria between 1971 and 1979

<u>Year</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>Type of Agreement</u>
1971	Dahomey (Rep. of Benin)	Bilateral Trade Agreement
1971	USSR	Bilateral Trade Agreement
1972	China	Trade and Co-operation
1972	Czechoslovakia	Economic Co-operation
1972	USSR	Technical Assistance
1973	USSR	Technical Assistance
1974	GDR	Trade Agreement
1975	USA	Investment Guarantee
1975-7	Angola	Bilateral Air Services
"	Ivory Coast	" " "
"	Ethiopia	" " "
"	Mali	" " "
"	Niger	" " "
"	Liberia	" " "
"	Pakistan	" " "
"	Sudan	" " "
1975	Senegal	Oil Pact
1976	USSR	Economic and Technical
1977	Togo	Trade Pact
1977	Iraq	Trade Treaty
1977	Denmark	Economic and Technical
1977	Norway	" " "
1977	Sweden	" " "
1977	Italy	" " "
1977	North Korea	Economic and Trade
1977	Ghana	Economic, Scientific & Technical
1977	Poland	Economic and Technical
1978 /		

<u>Year</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>Type of Agreement</u>
1978	Czechoslovakia	Technical Co-operation
1978	India	Memorandum of Co-operation
1978	Rumania	Memoranda of Understanding, Economic Co-operation and commercial relations
1978	Poland	Trade Agreement
1978	Bulgaria	Educational and Cultural Co-operation
1978	Yugoslavia	Economic Agreement
1978	Liberia	Air Traffic Co-operation
1978	Sudan	Air Traffic Services and Cultural Agreement
1978	Brazil	Bilateral Air Services
1978	Morocco	" " "
1978	Chad	" " "
1978	South Korea	" " "
1978	Barbados	" " "
1978	Kenya	" " "
1978	Rumania	" " "
1978	Britain	Formalisation of Existing Air Agreements
1978	North Korea	Technical and Economic Co-operation
1978	Iran	" " "
1978	Philippines	" " "
1979	Poland	Educational Co-operation
1979	India	Bilateral Economic Agreement
1979	China	Health Agreement
1979	France	Economic and Technological Co-operation
1979	Brazil	Bilateral Trade Pact
1979	USSR	Trade Agreement
1979	Hungary	Economic Agreement

**Source:** Sonni, Tyoden G., Development strategies and Foreign Policy in peripheral states: The Political Economy of Nigeria's External Relations, 1960-1975. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, Lancaster, 1980.

The government does not only encourage and sign these Agreements, it also monitors their operation to ensure that the objectives are not defeated.

### JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS

One trend which has developed from Nigeria's bilateral economic relations with other countries is the creation of Joint Economic Commissions between Nigeria and such countries like Niger, Benin, Ghana, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, etc.<sup>22</sup> The Joint Economic Commissions hold meetings annually to take stock of economic co-operation activities between the respective countries with a view to identifying any anomalies for rectification and exploring other areas of mutual co-operation. Obviously government's interests in these commissions are economic.

The same principle of promoting economic growth is the motive force of Nigeria's effort to foster regional economic co-operation through the River Niger Commission, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These will be discussed in chapter six. Generally Nigeria's membership and role in the Community and Commissions indicate that its economic motives are not narrow or shortrun in terms of immediate gains to Nigeria, to the exclusion of other states in the region. Rather the motives extend to promoting economic growth of the region.

### EXTERNAL INVESTMENT

The principle of maintaining economic growth is concerned also with promoting investment. By investment we mean the deployment

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22. Ijewere, G.O. (Dr.), Induction Course lecture, Lagos, June 1979, op. cit., p. 7.



of resources in productive enterprises for the generation of capital resources and provision of the essential needs of the people, both of which would bring about improvement in the living standard of the citizens. There are domestic and external investments, and in either case, the same consideration for national economic growth applies. All governments of Nigeria have tried to encourage internal investment and in doing so they invite foreign entrepreneurs to invest in the country. The government recognises the need for overseas capital experience and skills in Nigeria's effort to industrialise. It encourages foreign investment especially when such gives Nigerians the opportunity of acquiring technical and managerial skills. The Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972 and Amendment Decree of 1977 reflect government's determination to secure greater Nigerian ownership, control and participation in Nigeria's industrial growth, while at the same time encouraging foreign participation and investment by offering generous incentives to foreign investors.

Among the "Investment Incentives" provided by the government include (1) "The Industrial Development (Import Duties Relief) Act, 1957", which permits the repayment of import duties on materials brought into Nigeria for use in the manufacture or processing of goods, (2) "Industrial Development (Income Tax Relief) Decree, 1971" which gives exemption from income tax during the early years to Companies engaged in "pioneer"<sup>23</sup> industries approved by the government; and (3) "Remittance of Dividends" which allows a foreign investor to repatriate a maximum of 60% of the Company's after-tax

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23. The government grants pioneer status to certain industries, e.g. those involved in processing of food crops, vegetables and fruits.

profit. Also expatriate workers in Nigeria are allowed to remit up to 50% of their annual income from Nigeria under their annual personal remittance quota. In providing these conditions and incentives, government is inspired by the belief that such investments will accelerate national economic development. Whether the investments and incentives have been in the right direction and making the desired contribution to development remain a different issue.

As regards investments abroad by the government and people of Nigeria, it can be said that the government has not been so enthusiastic. Although a few investments are made here and there like joint projects with some neighbouring African countries, having equity share in African Industrial Development Bank (AIDB) and perhaps the purchase of buildings abroad for use by Nigerian Government Agencies, they have been motivated by other considerations (i.e. assistance to African countries and in the latter desire to reduce costs of rentage) rather than the desire to make profit that could be repatriated in support of the national economy. Many Nigerian entrepreneurs have tried to invest abroad but have been constrained by various factors including shortage of foreign exchange and comparative lack of government incentives, similar to those offered by say the governments of the USA and UK to their nationals interested in overseas investments. For instance the promotion of investments is a major objective of United States foreign policy and according to Stephen D. Krasner, US officials work assiduously to create a favourable world-wide climate for the direct investment of American private capital as a means of gaining "Territorial access" and projecting "American

power".<sup>24</sup> American policy makers, he explained, have over the years adopted general policies that facilitate foreign investment. A typical example is the tax structure which does not discriminate against overseas activity but rather actively encourages overseas investment. Krasner added:

"... with the Economic Act of 1948, the United States ... Investment Guarantee Programs insured US Companies against some of the risks of foreign investment, such as currency inconvertibility and nationalisation. ... The United States Government even gave direct financial assistance to American Companies to establish foreign mining and processing facilities".<sup>25</sup>

Basically while the United States government encourages investments abroad, the Nigerian government tries to encourage investments within its own territory. The reasons are obvious especially because of the differences in the level of development and the amount of foreign exchange available in the two countries. However, a few Nigerians have some investments abroad and these range from setting up private companies to buying shares in large companies and multinational corporations. The investments are few and are yet in their infancy. It is hoped that in the future they will be sources of foreign exchange earning for the country.

Generally, the idea of contributing to national economic growth and the development of a national economic capacity that could be self-reliant spurs foreign policy makers and practitioners alike when negotiating agreements on trade, scientific and technical co-operation between Nigeria and other countries. The same principle underlies the offer of incentives to foreign investors

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24. Krasner, D. Stephen, Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and US foreign policy. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1978, pp. 10-11.

25. Ibid., pp. 94-99.



being attracted to invest in Nigeria as well as any assistance afforded to Nigerian businessmen in their dealings with foreigners. The underlying philosophy is that benefits accruing to a Nigerian from such activities are ultimately for national development.

### CULTURAL IDENTITY

One of the underlying motives of Nigeria in external affairs is to regain the "lost glory" of Africa and the black people in the world through cultural "risorgimento"<sup>26</sup> and the projection on to the international plane of the image of the black man and his ways of life. By "lost glory" we mean the displacement of African heritages of culture and humanism, degradation of African personality and independence and suppression of the pride of Africa as the birthplace of world civilisation. The Nigerian elite, including the most conservative is apparently agitated by the predominance of foreign culture not only in the general practice of international relations but also in many faces of Nigerian life. In international relations, the style, language, dress etc. of diplomatic practice are foreign to Nigeria. The predominant culture which prevails in international discourse is that of Europe, leaving the impression that Nigeria like other new nations is politically independent but culturally dependant. As a result, efforts are made, as part of the decolonisation process, to project the Nigerian heritage of humanism, arts, music, dresses, food, wine etc. in the conduct of international relations. A number of events (referred to below) highlight the principle of cultural identity in Nigeria's foreign policy.

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26. See Azikiwe, N., Renascent Africa. Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, 1968, p. 25.

The rationale for the adoption of this principle can be further explained. First, in our background study of evolution of Nigerian foreign policy, we noted that there were traditional diplomatic practices and techniques for conducting negotiations for peace or war, negotiating trading conditions, arranging treaties and sealing them, and sometimes for conducting arbitrations and parleys. Nigerians also have their languages, mode of dressing and concept of the family, or to be specific, membership of a diplomatic household. All these combine to give meaning to the way of life (culture) of a people and provide the basis for identification and incorporation. But with the superimposition of alien culture there was displacement of these value bases of identification and incorporation.

The implications of such cultural displacement are obvious for example, while Nigeria's traditional method of conducting relations was characterised by open diplomacy, the prevailing international relations practice is characterised by secret diplomacy - a device which places the newcomer to the game at a disadvantage. In terms of method, the Nigerian (or African) has a frontal approach to discussions and negotiations. This implies presenting a matter in a manner that will aptly reflect the speaker's feeling and idea on a given subject. If one is opposed to a particular act or policy of a partner in interaction, he registers the opposition directly. If one is angry, he says so directly. If one requires an obligation from a friend, he asks for it directly from the friend, who in turn could grant or refuse the obligation, giving reasons in clear terms for his decision even when such reasons are sentimental. On the contrary, the prevailing culture in international relations lacks such "frankness"

in discourse and rather employs various nuances and indirect expressions to make complex an otherwise simple matter. This displacement of one method by the other creates the problem of continuous adjustment and remind practitioners of the need to uphold a national identity and procedure for the conduct of relations with the other nations. In terms of language, the official language of Nigeria is English – which is a foreign tongue and it is the language with which Nigeria conducts its foreign policy. Being a foreign language there are bound to be problems in the usage. Such language problems and the implications on effective communication sometimes remind practitioners of their lost cultural identity and the need to regain it.

Second, the principle of the cultural identity or the need to project and assert the image and values of Africa and the black man in the world derives from the intellectual reactions that characterised African nationalist movement in the 19th century. Without the intention at this point to discuss the nationalist movement, it may be necessary to recall briefly such themes in African political thought like "African Nationalism", "Back to Africa", "Africa for Africans", "African Personality and Negritude" etc.<sup>27</sup> Great Africanists like Marcus Garvey, Edward Blyden, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Leopold Senghor etc. wrote and spoke on these themes. They talked about the contribution of Africa to world civilisation and considered as imperative the rejuvenation of African culture. This would project on the world

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27. For details read Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey or Africa for the Africans, vols. 1 and 2, Universal Publishing House, New York, 1923 and 1926; Dr. Abiola Irele, "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism", Journal of Modern African Studies, vol. 3, no. 4, Cambridge, October 1965, pp. 321-48; Nkrumah, Kwame, I Speak of Freedom, Heinemann Ltd., London, 1961, pp. 125-134 and also Africa Must Unite (1963), pp. 132, 140.



scene the distinct personality of the black race and would facilitate the expression and assertion of that personality anywhere in the world. The philosophy of African personality involves proving to the oppressors of Africa that Africans are human beings like themselves and that the differences between races are the result of other factors than innate or biological circumstances. The philosophy urges a sort of cultural revival and unity of all black people and a united African voice in the world community. This strand of African political philosophy made a tremendous appeal to Nigerian leaders who from independence have been working for the African unity and solidarity and above have linked the destiny of Nigerians with that of other black people in the world.

There are identifiable activities that underline the importance to Nigeria of upholding its cultural identity and values in the conduct of relations with other nations. Since this decade, it has become a tradition to offer some state guests Kola nuts on their arrival in Nigeria. In typical Nigerian tradition, to offer Kola nuts to a visitor is a symbolic gesture of welcome, appreciation for the visit and an assurance of good faith. This traditional symbolism has been invoked in many international celebrations in Nigeria. Similarly, it is now a convention among Nigerian dignitaries, including diplomats at home and abroad, when arranging parties for their foreign counterparts to provide Nigerian food and palm wine (the latter if possible as it is not exported) and less English food. The government encourages this cultural nationalism in food and drinks. Part of the grand design for the expression and assertion of the African personality is selected in

the mode of dressing of many Nigerian officials during international gatherings. Prime Minister Balewa and his Foreign Minister Joja Wachukwa were leading Nigerian personalities in the vanguard of the revolution in the diplomatic dressing. They mostly wore Nigerian national clothing as diplomatic or official dress. This earned the Foreign Minister the accolade of being a "flamboyant Minister". The Nigerian national dress is different from the European official dress, which prevailed up to the early sixties in all international and diplomatic circles. In the early seventies the Ministry of External Affairs in a circular included Nigerian national dress among the official dress which could be worn by officials while on duty. Hitherto, suit and tie were the official dress while on duty. Since then, many Nigerian leaders and officials have continued to wear national dress to offices and diplomatic functions. In pursuit of this principle, therefore, Nigeria has made its cultural nationalism in dressing acceptable on the international scene.

For the same reasons of upholding the identity and values of the black person, the Nigerian government has been relentless in its effort to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racism. These are the evils that robbed Africa of its glorious image and contribution to worldwide civilisation. The importance attached to this principle of "cultural resorgimento" is evidenced by Nigeria's role as chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, since its inception. Records of the proceedings of the committee indicate efforts by its members to restore respect for the black person and revive the image of Africa through the elimination of the apartheid system in South Africa. It could be said that the principle of cultural identity is a moving force in Nigeria's global role.

## NATIONAL ASPIRATION

The principle of "national aspiration" is that which influences the government in the determination of the scope of relations or areas of collaboration that would enhance the realisation of certain desires, expectations and hopes of Nigerian citizens, organisations and agencies. National aspiration is essentially concerned with what Nigerians want as distinct from their basic needs. To distinguish between these two terms, a brief explanation may serve. In Nigeria certain non-negotiable national interests, such as the independence and authority of the nation-state, national security, economic and cultural survival, are basic needs of the state. There are still other things the country wants which include honour, prestige, power etc., and these are the wants of Nigeria. The first category of "needs" (i.e. the core interests) is guided by the principles of "national protection"; "national economic growth" and "cultural identity", while the second category of "wants" (i.e. specific or negotiable interests) is guided in its realisation by "national aspiration".

In 1962, Prime Minister Balewa called for a restructuring of the UNO to provide for an African permanent seat in the Security Council.<sup>28</sup> Such a call was motivated by national aspiration, for it has been the desire of all Nigerian leaders "to secure for Nigeria ... an effective voice in international affairs" so as "to advertise the importance of Africa in world affairs".<sup>29</sup> To secure a seat in the Security Council is a desirable objective that will mean honour to the country and a boost to its power and influence in world affairs, but the failure to realise it will not affect the existence of Nigeria as an independent and sovereign

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28. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., p. 60.

29. Zik - Selected Speeches, op. cit., pp. 70, 314.



nation nor will it affect the welfare of Nigerian citizens. Another example will help to explain "national aspiration". In one of the bizarre episodes in Nigerian-British relations, when the British government refused to repatriate General Gowon to Nigeria to be tried for alleged involvement in the military coup of 13 February 1976, many Nigerians wanted the government to sever relations with Britain, whereas they require British technology for their national advancement. Both the demand for the repatriation of Gowon and the decision at that time to decrease the level of diplomatic representation between the two countries were based primarily on public opinion and sentiments against Gowon's regime. Government reaction therefore was motivated by "national aspiration".

Basically, "national aspiration" is derived from public opinion, the demands of trade unions, student organisations and other interest groups in the country. This then raises the question as to what makes an aspiration "national" and when is it relevant to foreign policy? An exponent of this principle, Grant Hugo, wrote<sup>30</sup> that an "aspiration" becomes "national" when it is so regarded by the government of the day. Such aspiration must also be able to command sufficient popular support to constitute a national aspiration. Drawing a distinction between "aspiration" and "interest", he wrote that "aspirations" have ethical or sentimental character and aim at meeting the emotional needs of the people while "interests" have early material advantages and seek to provide the material necessities of the people. He said, when supporters of a particular course of action base their arguments on ethical or sentimental considerations of justice, honour, obligation, gratitude,

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30. Hugo, Grant, Britain in Tomorrow's World - Principles of Foreign Policy. Chatto & Windus, London, 1969, pp. 31-53.

democracy, the interests of humanity etc., they are expressing an aspiration.

"To put it in simpler and more arbitrary terms, a government endeavouring to satisfy national aspirations is concerned with the emotional needs of the people, a government considering national interests with their more material necessities".<sup>31</sup>

On the relevance of national aspiration to foreign policy, Hugo said an aspiration is relevant to foreign policy when it suggests to the government which of the various courses reasonably open to it in foreign policy most closely corresponds to popular wishes.<sup>32</sup> This means that national aspiration should help the government to determine popular expectations and which issues the people consider it worthwhile to become involved in. Nevertheless, it is the duty of government officials to define the national aspirations and extent to which decisions can be modified by national aspiration. Based on the foregoing explanations, efforts and activities of the government towards enhancing Nigeria's stature and power in world politics generally are based on the principle of national aspiration.

#### AFRICAN SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION

The need for African freedom and security is the underlying basis of Nigeria's African policy. A senior government official said that Nigeria's African policy is based on the "principle of African unity"<sup>33</sup> but in explaining the principle he said Nigeria has no territorial ambition in Africa and is not interested in amalgamation or unification of the countries in Africa. Rather,

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31. Ibid., pp. 36-7.

32. Ibid., p. 37.

33. Interview.

he said Nigeria is determined to secure the independence of freedom of African countries from external domination and to ensure solidarity of the countries in the continent on world issues. To avoid ambiguity in the use of the term "African Unity" it is preferable to refer to general guidelines of Nigeria's African policy as the principle of African security and co-operation. This principle tells Nigeria when its interests in Africa are threatened or violated and suggests to it possible actions which could be taken to remedy the situation. The question can be asked as to what constitutes Nigeria's interests in Africa. To put it simply, Nigeria has an interest in the security of Africa, in the independence of African countries and in their progress, without which Nigeria's independence, security and progress cannot be guaranteed. The principle of African security and co-operation is thus concerned with the defence of African freedom and independence as well as the promotion of the welfare of African people through the functional co-operation with the African countries in economic, technical, cultural and other fields.

Four components of the principle can be identified briefly. They are (1) the defence of the right of all countries in Africa to self-determination, independence and freedom from colonial rule. Based on its own colonial experience Nigeria's leaders have come to accept that colonial exploitation is to a great extent responsible for the backwardness of Africa in world affairs. Therefore, for Africa to come to prominence and to be respected, it is necessary to liberate all its countries from colonial domination. According to Balewa, "our own freedom can only have meaning to the extent that



we utilize our efforts and goodwill to achieve the same for all Africans".<sup>34</sup> Thus, there is a national commitment to the total liberation of Africa. To this end, the apartheid system in South Africa is seen as "colonial rule in its worst form"<sup>35</sup> which must be dismantled according to Nigerian sources. (2) The fostering of functional co-operation of African countries in world affairs. With the belief that African countries would enhance their position in world politics, if they present a united front in their dealings with the other more advanced countries in the world, Nigeria has been relentless in the effort to encourage mutual understanding among African countries and their coming together from time to time to review African problems and examine possible means of solving them. (3) The promotion of economic growth through mutual inter-dependence and assistance among all African countries. (4) The promotion of collective effort for the security of Africa. This includes preventing extra-African intervention in internal affairs of the continent and preventing the use of Africa as the arena for super power rivalry.

Every post-independence government in Nigeria has invoked and applied the principle of African security and co-operation in the country's foreign policy. It was the underlying principle in Prime Minister Balewa's initiatives for the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963. According to Stremlau:

"Eighteen months before the OAU was formed, the federal Government invited all independent African states to send their foreign ministers to a meeting in Lagos. In Ghana's absence, reached a tentative agreement on the formula for OAU Charter.

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34. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., p. 59.

35. Harriman, L.O., Nigeria's Ambassador to the United Nations, New York, and Chairman of UN Special Committee Against Apartheid (1975-79) while addressing other members of the Nigerian delegation to the UN, October 1978.

When the federal delegation left for the first Pan-African summit in May 1963, it carried a brief prepared by the Ministry of External Affairs that outlined the basic objectives .... With the exception of principal (f) which was replaced by a plank affirming "a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs", the seven points in the Nigerian brief reappear almost verbatim in Article III of the OAU Charter".<sup>36</sup>

In pursuit of this principle, Nigeria has been contributing substantially to the organisation's funds. Nigeria is the largest contributor to the OAU Liberation Fund and has singly carried out the Organisation's peace-keeping function in Chad. In all these, Nigeria is motivated by the need to promote African brotherhood and solidarity. In early 1966, Nigeria hosted the first-ever Commonwealth Conference outside London, ostensibly to mobilise international opinion against Ian Smith's apartheid regime in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). In 1971, at the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore, the principle of African freedom, security and co-operation was the basis of General Gowon's rigorous lobby for Commonwealth pressure to prevent the conservative government of Edward Heath from selling arms to the Ian Smith regime. Similarly, Nigeria's role in Angola (1976), in Zimbabwe (1979), and its assistance to Liberation Movements in South Africa as well as other fraternal assistance to many African countries, have all been dictated by government's commitment to the principle of African security and co-operation.

The principle has been elaborated and stressed by several Nigerian leaders. Chief Awolowe, as leader of the Action Group, said, "our primary objective will be the promotion of all measures for ensuring self-determination and democratic freedom for all

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36. Stremiau, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1977, pp. 15-16.



peoples of African descent and for all subject or oppressed peoples".<sup>37</sup> Also, Dr. Azikiwe as leader of the NCNC hammered on the essence of African freedom and security in Nigeria's foreign policy, when he said, "We are not prepared to take counsel with transgressors of Africa or to bind Nigeria to undertake to protect the interests of those who do not respect the dignity of man either in Africa or in the world".<sup>38</sup> Similarly, General Gowon in his address to the nation on 1 October 1975 stated,

"Our policy has been one of upholding the dignity of the African, safeguarding his interests and promoting his wellbeing, and protecting him from all forms of oppression and exploitation.... The support which Nigeria gives for the struggle for human dignity and eradication of racialism and colonialism in Africa and our determination to pursue these goals will continue to be intensified until the whole of Africa is free from the strain of degradation".<sup>39</sup>

Thus, one of the obvious reasons for Nigeria's interest in Africa is the belief by the leaders that the national security and economic interests of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are inextricably tied up with the security, the stability and the economic and social well-being of other African countries. This explains the importance of the principle of security and co-operation in Africa to the foreign policy of Nigeria.

#### NON-ALIGNMENT

The principle of non-alignment is the basis of Nigeria's association with each of the ideological power blocs and military alliances. It suggests to Nigeria not to align itself as a matter

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37. Epelle, Sam, The Promise of Nigeria. Pan Books Ltd., London, 1960, p. 146.

38. Ibid., p. 146.

39. Quoted from Usman, Bala Yusufu, Towards the Liberation of Nigeria. New Beacon Books Ltd., London, 1979, p. 165.



of routine with any "axis of geo-politics",<sup>40</sup> not to allow the establishment in its territory of a military base by any foreign power; not to take sides with any of the parties in the cold war in the event of a dispute; to view all political issues arising from the cold war with the independent objectivity and in the interest of world peace; to guard against military and ideological commitments in its association with the blocs; and to use its relationship with the rival powers wherever possible to bring about relaxation of tension in the world. These 'do's and don't's' are the components of the principle of non-alignment that guide Nigeria in its approach to both world politics and relations with the USA and USSR.

Some factors in contemporary world politics account for Nigeria's adoption of non-alignment as a principle of its foreign policy. The factors have given rise to various explanations of non-alignment. Nigeria's former President, Dr. Azikiwe, once argued that "the Eastern and Western blocs did not give the world the moral leadership which the African nations envisaged". Therefore Nigeria would not align with either but would opt to be non-aligned. By non-alignment in foreign policy, he said, "We shall be independent and not be neutral or partisan, in the conduct of our international relations and we shall not be aligned to any axis of geopolitics. Alignment in foreign policy would entangle Nigeria in military alliances which are not in our national interest and which would endanger our corporate existence".<sup>41</sup> Another great African statesman Dr. Kwame Nkrumah explained "non-alignment" in a similar way. He said,

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40. The expression was used by former President of Nigeria, Dr. Azikiwe.

41. Extract from 1959 Election Manifesto. Also in Epelle, Sam, op. cit., p. 145.

non-alignment does not mean keeping aloof from burning international issues of our day; it does not imply isolationism; it is in no way anti-Western nor is it anti-Eastern. Rather it means a positive stand on the great issues of our day based on our own convictions completely uninfluenced by any of the power blocs.<sup>42</sup> Nkrumah further said that by non-alignment, we do not intend to entangle ourselves in the cold war by lining up with one side or the other - either with the East or with the West. It would be suicidal to involve ourselves in the disputes of the great powers by taking sides. Our aim, therefore, he said, is to maintain friendly relations with all countries and to be enemy to none. It is our belief, he added, that international blocs and rivalries exacerbate and do not solve disputes and that we must be free to judge issues on their merits and to look for solutions that are just and peaceful, irrespective of the Powers involved.<sup>43</sup>

But another African statesman, President Julius Nyerere, represented non-alignment as an active policy of solidarity with the peoples fighting for their independence. Pointing out that colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism in all their manifestations still deny freedom to peoples and nullify the independence of small and weak nations. President Nyerere argued that the attainment of African nationalist goals of independence and freedom leading to the end of liberation struggles, will bring about a substantial reduction of international tension. Speaking at the Non-Alignment Conference in Cuba (1979), Nyerere said, "We are not a bloc. Our movement is an assertion of the right

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42. Nkrumah, Kwame, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London, 1967.

43. Ibid., p. 65.

of small nations to stay outside all power blocs and to develop according to their own interests as they see them. Our function is to press for the political freedom of all colonies, and ensure that the post-independence governments have the power to develop their country along lines determined by their own people".<sup>44</sup> Apart from the anti-colonialist view of non-alignment, there is yet a third perspective which links non-alignment with not just political independence but with the freedom of every nation to pursue its own economic, social and cultural development without intimidation or hindrance. This perspective is furthered by Nigerian scholars like Ikenna Nzimiro and Bala Mohammed who have insisted that the economic independence is more important for the development of non-alignment foreign policy.<sup>45</sup> However for in-depth understanding of the meaning of non-alignment, one needs to combine the pure political perspective of Nkrumah with Nyerere's anti-colonialist view as well as the economic aspects of the Movement's objectives. In this way a more balanced conception of non-alignment, reflective of the dynamics of the Movement and changing perception of world politics will be achieved.

As a principle of Nigerian foreign policy, non-alignment was adopted as a result of the perception by Nigerian leaders of:

1. Big power rivalry for spheres of influence in Africa;
2. Past experience of "people deprived for too long of their resources and rights" by European colonialists;<sup>46</sup>
3. The cold war rivalry between the USA and USSR;
4. The need to reject capitalist as well as Communist intervention in future conflicts, in preference for "African solutions to African problems".

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44. Speech at Non-Alignment Conference in Cuba, November 1979. See Nigerian Statesman, November 26, 1979, p. 12.

45. Bala, Mohammed, Africa and Non-Alignment, A Study on the foreign Relations of New Nations, Triumph Publishing Co. Ltd, Kano, 1982, pp.1-2

46. Gavshon, Arthur, Crisis in Africa: Battleground of East and West. Penguin Books, England, 1981, p. 15.



The global political events that gave rise to these perceptions have been discussed in Gerard Chaliand, The Struggle for Africa - Conflict of the Great Powers, and Arthur Gavshon's Crisis in Africa - Battle Ground of East and West. Generally since the emergence of nuclear power, the US and USSR have engaged in fierce contest for spheres of influence in the world leading to the stage of no war, no peace (proxy-wars) in their relations with one another. As a result, international relations have been characterised by tension and anxiety. It is observed that since 1945, the two super Powers have carefully avoided direct confrontation while persistently engaged in crisis management outside their sovereign territories. This strategy generated a consciousness among African nationalists of the dangers of committing their governments to any form of alliance. In keeping with a Nigerian popular proverb that in the war of elephants, the loser is the owner of the farm where the fight occurred, Nigerian leaders have decided not to offer their territory as a battle ground for the super powers. Nigeria is therefore guided in its relations with these powers by the idea of non-alignment. It must be noted that despite the anxiety about transferring super power rivalry into Africa, events in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Egypt, Chad, Zaire, Ethiopia, Somalia, Morocco, Sudan etc. show that Africa is fast being transformed into an arena of East-West confrontation. The obvious implication of these events in the countries reaffirm Nigeria's non-aligned stance in world politics.

Another reason for the adoption of the principle of non-alignment is that Nigeria would want to remain independent of any foreign control, as to do otherwise would remind the people of the decades

of colonial rule. Moreover, Nigeria's desire for world peace demands objectivity and non-partisanship in any international conflict. This principle has guided Nigeria both in its relations with the super powers and in voting on major issues at the United Nations and other international conferences.

#### PRINCIPLE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND CO-OPERATION

The Nigerian government has demonstrated interest in the promotion of international peace and co-operation. Nigerian leaders see the maintenance of order and peace in the international system as the greatest problem facing the world community. Moreover, with the realisation of the newness of their country and its relative weak position vis-a-vis the big power actors, coupled with the determination to preserve their newly regained independence and territorial sovereignty, they were unanimous in the agreement that Nigeria would play an important role in world affairs by promoting international peace and co-operation. The acceptance of this principle as a guide in foreign policy has been reflected in speeches and actions of Nigerian leaders. For example, extract from the Action Group election Manifesto (1959) concluded the Party's foreign policy with an emphasis on the promotion of international peace and co-operation. It noted that the pursuit of the course of international co-operation "should enable us to exercise a friendly influence in the direction of world peace and social justice throughout Africa and the rest of the world".<sup>47</sup> Similarly the NCNC stated that it will use Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth of Nations to persuade any of its members to adhere to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and "shall maintain friendly relations with the family

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47. In Sam Epelle, op. cit., p. 146.

of Nations and co-operate with them and the United Nations in the maintenance of world peace and the collective security of mankind".<sup>48</sup> This principle has been pursued since then and it has influenced consideration of many foreign policy issues.

Recently, all political parties in Nigeria (2nd Republic) upheld the principle of international peace and co-operation. For example, "the foreign policy of the NPN will be guided by the following considerations ... (vii) the promotion of world peace through international co-operation and understanding."<sup>49</sup> The UPN said, "we will ... maintain friendly relations with all friendly countries irrespective of political systems, and support the United Nations".<sup>50</sup> Similarly the NPP, PRP and GNPP declared their commitment to general disarmament and world peace. These show that the principle is as valid today as it was in the sixties.

Briefly we have tried to identify, classify and explain some of the principles that guide the formulation and execution of Nigerian foreign policy. Generally, whether in political or economic terms, Nigeria is not motivated by narrow state interests or short term gains. Rather its interests include that of other states, especially within its region and continent. Therefore one of the distinguishing features of Nigerian foreign policy arising from its principles is that it puts long-term interests in place of short term gains. In other words, it is devoid of narrow state interests and cherishes fair and balanced relations among nations. In the next chapter we are going to examine the environments of Nigerian foreign policy as the roots of such principles but especially to identify the major sources of input into foreign policy making.

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48. Ibid., p. 145.

49. National Party of Nigeria (NPN): Election Manifesto, Lagos, 1979.

50. Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN: Election Manifesto, Lagos, 1979.



**PART III      THE ENVIRONMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY MAKING**

## CHAPTER 5

### THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

In this chapter we are going to examine the domestic environment of Nigerian foreign policy with the aim of identifying the major sources of input into foreign policy making. Then we will analyse the types of input from the environment in order to appreciate the policy process and its output. The assumption here is that policy making has an environment, from which are derived inputs (ingredients) used in formulating foreign policy. Like David Easton said, the environment consists of all the social, physical, biological and economic etc. sub-systems of the society.<sup>1</sup> It includes numerous socio-cultural agents and organisations, economic institutions, geophysical and biological factors, local interest groups, associations and parties. It is in the midst of all these that the machinery of foreign policy is situated and functions. The whole idea of environment is to illustrate the relationship between the sub-systems in the society and the structures responsible for foreign policy making and execution. The relationship is such that the environment influences the functioning of the policy machinery while the functions of the machinery influence the pattern of behaviour in the environment. Influences from the environment are described as inputs and for analytical convenience are classified into demands and supports. The former are in the form of societal needs and expectations that are communicated to the policy makers.

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1. Easton, David, A Framework for Political Analysis, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965, pp. 69-71.

The latter includes resources, co-operation or non-co-operation, threats, exchanges etc. directed to policy makers to facilitate their processing of societal demands. The institutions and agents through which such demands and supports emerge are regarded as sources of input. The questions to ask here include: what constitutes the domestic environment of Nigerian foreign policy?; what are the main sources of input in this environment?

### THE NIGERIAN ENVIRONMENT

The domestic environment of the country's foreign policy consists of the entire society of Nigeria. This embraces the people and their culture, social institutions (churches, mosques, schools), the economy (farming communities, markets, trade unions, industrialists), the political system (local government councils, state structure, the government's public services, political parties etc), and the system of relationship between the component units/states in the federation. All these make demands of one sort or another and give support in one form or another to the government. That is to say, the citizens and their socio-political and economic structures and institutions constitute the environment of foreign policy making. There is a constant interaction between these environmental structures and institutions on the one hand and the government on the other.

In making foreign policy, the government receives from the environment demands and support which it converts into decisions and actions about the conduct of the country's external relations.



## SOURCES OF INPUT

Inputs are generated from every facet of the environment (society), ranging from chieftaincy institutions to town (improvement) unions, religious organisations, trade unions, the press and student associations. But some demands and support (inputs) are communicated to the foreign policy machinery directly while others are made indirectly. For example, when some Christian organisations petitioned the then East Central State Government in 1970 urging it not to expel the European Missionaries in the state, they were really making demands on the Federal government's foreign policy machinery, of which the Immigration Department is a part, as noted earlier. Also when traders in Kano and Maiduguri complained of the menace of refugees from Chad, even though the complaints were made to the Emirs and Councillors, the traders were in fact making demands, through their local leaders, on the foreign policy machinery to devise means of controlling the crisis in Chad and ameliorating its impact on Nigeria. In effect, therefore, inputs come from various sources in the environment but some demands or support are latent while some are manifest. Put simply, some inputs are more effectively communicated than others. When inputs from a particular source are effectively channelled consistently, the impression grows that such sources are about the only ones in that environment.

In actual fact there are many sources of input into foreign policy making in the Nigerian environment. However,

it will be difficult in a modest chapter to try to examine all of them. It is therefore necessary to identify only the major domestic sources of input into foreign policy making in Nigeria and these include:

- (i) traditional institutions, political culture and socialisation process;
- (ii) public opinion;
- (iii) the National Assembly;
- (iv) political parties;
- (v) the economy.

We will try to explain below the type of inputs from these sources.

#### TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS, POLITICAL CULTURE AND SOCIALISATION PROCESS

The most notable traditional institutions of political relevance in modern Nigeria are perhaps the Chieftaincy and Council of elders. The head of a chieftaincy is the traditional ruler, whose official name varies from place to place in Nigeria. For instance, among the Fulanis, the most senior traditional ruler is the Sultan of Sokoto. In Bornu there is the Shehu and in many northern states, the traditional ruler is called the Emir. In southern parts of Nigeria, they are variously called Eze and Obi among the Ibos, Oba among the Yorubas and Edos and Obong among the Efiks, etc. Each traditional ruler and members of his council constitute the chieftaincy. It is a highly respected institution. In this era of frequent military coups, each succeeding leader tries to secure the support of some prominent traditional rulers. The ordinary citizen on his part looks upon the traditional ruler to determine

whether or not a particular military leader is for the masses. As a result, traditional institutions have become so elevated that their advice on certain issues cannot be completely ignored. Their influence in foreign policy is significant. In the Chadian case under reference, the Shehu of Bornu was among the personalities who called on the federal government to intensify efforts to find a solution to the crisis in Chad Republic.<sup>2</sup> There was a similar call on the federal government by the Obong of Calabar when Cameroun soldiers attacked Nigerian fishermen at the south-eastern borders of the country. Many traditional rulers are interested to see that the principle of federal character is applied in the appointment of Nigerian representatives abroad. They like to see qualified people from their chiefdom employed in the foreign service.

Political culture is the prevailing political values and beliefs in a society that determine for the people their attitudes, forms of political action and expectations, while political socialisation is the process by which people learn to play political roles in the society. Both provide the basis of political orientation and education as well as the avenue through which people are recruited to participate in political decision-making, of which foreign policy is a part. The agencies of both political culture and socialisation are

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2. From the Shehu's address to foreign service officers who visited his palace while on tour of Bornu state. In 1984, the Oni of Ife and Emir of Kanu visited Israel, when the government has not formally changed its policy towards that country. The two visits were considered embarrassing and the federal government denounced them.



closely related and include tradition, mores, the family, the school, the Churches (Mosques), the peer group etc. through which a person grows and which ultimately influence his/her behaviour. Joseph Frankel has observed that the decision-makers in foreign policy are influenced in their considerations by the prevailing cultural values and beliefs in their domestic environment. He said that because

"Decision-makers in foreign policy are much more intimately connected with their domestic environment, they easily acquire such influences, through internalising its values, through partaking in the national culture and characteristics, through being constantly exposed to influences and pressures in the play of domestic politics".<sup>3</sup>

Thus among the ways in which political culture and socialisation influence foreign policy-making is through the individual policy-maker who having imbibed these cultural values and orientations, has the tendency to manifest them as part of his/her perceptions, assumptions and proposals in given issues.

The influence of political culture and socialisation on policy-making is perhaps too pronounced in Nigeria. First, Nigeria is a conglomerate society in which political culture and socialisation processes are characterised by primordial levels of identification, attachment and loyalty.<sup>4</sup> These

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3. Frankel, Joseph, The Making of Foreign Policy - An Analysis of Decision-Making, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p. 70.

4. Post, K.W.J. and Vickers, Michael, Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-65, Heinemann, London, 1973, pp. 11-35. Explaining primordial loyalty, the authors said "at certain times and in certain situations it meant something fundamental and overriding to individuals that they were Yoruba, Hausa, Tiv or whatever. So important were these identifications that at times they could override loyalty to Nigeria as a whole or to one of its regions, dedication to the parliamentary process, respect for law and order and even for the sanctity of human life. It is in this sense that we would speak of a primordial loyalty here as something demanding a total commitment transcending those to any other groups". Ibid., p. 12.

characteristics transmitted to the people - (products of the political culture and socialisation) - tend to mould their personality and world view. These too influence the people in determining their political values and type of demands and support they give to the political system in general and foreign policy machinery in particular. Instances in which these varying cultural orientations are brought into play include the introduction of federal character and federal balance, the quota system of representation and contests for positions in Nigeria's foreign Ministry. Other aspects are reflected in the prevailing notion of "son-of-the-soil" and the practice of "godfather relationships" by which certain conversion from branch B to A, as well as some promotions and postings are not based on merit but on some relationship with the responsible authorities. Thus, primordial loyalties, nepotism and social affinity are among the elements of the political culture that influence foreign policy making.

Another element of Nigeria's political culture which influences decisions and actions in foreign affairs is its altruistic tradition. To understand the influence of altruism on the behaviour of Nigerians demands the explanation of altruism. According to Azikiwe, "socially speaking, Nigerian social ideology is altruistic. It is devoted to promote the well-being of all the members of Nigerian society. The extended family system regards Nigerians as offsprings of a common ancestry".<sup>5</sup> Altruism as a way of life like capitalism or communism permeates every institution of the society. There

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5. Azikiwe, Nnamdi, Ideology for Nigeria: Capitalism, Socialism or Welfarism? Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Ltd., Lagos, 1980, p. 8.

is altruistic interpretation of the essence of the society, the role of the individual, history, law, economics and politics. We will limit our explanation to what is immediately relevant, i.e. its influence on policy makers and other sources of input into foreign policy making.

Altruism underlines the value of the individual in the family and the society. It establishes the relationship of the individual, the family and the society with the other. Altruism is also a source of norms and mores that determine right or wrong behaviour. It explains that an individual belongs to the family and the family owns the individual. What the individual owns is part of what belongs to the family. Similarly, the family can only exist in a society and there can be no society without the families. Apart from one's position in the family, the individual is valued as an individual in the society and occupies a position according to his role in the society. The relationship between the individual and the family is by analogy similar to the relationship between the family and the society. The same relationship exists between one society and the other. There is a permanent relationship and reciprocal obligation of the individual, the family and the society to each other. The same obligation exists in the relationship between one society and the other. Human affairs in the society are ordered in a pattern to reflect the interdependence of the individuals in the family as well as the interdependence of the families in the society etc. The system of relationship and interdependence in aggregate leads to the strengthening of the feeling of community and collectivity. It also gives rise to some sentiments of



shared responsibility, for the conduct of a common life and such sentiments influence their system of relations. Thus a member of the National Assembly in Nigeria's second Republic had to say:

"In my mind all Africans are brothers whether they live in Namibia or Somalia, Gambia or Egypt. We cannot pretend that all is well when our brothers are suffering. We owe them both moral and material support just as we owe to brothers of the nuclear family". 6a

He further said:

"If God is gracious enough to bless us with abundant resources and power and keep us in the midst of deprived relations, it would be unwise to abandon such relations. The proper thing will be to accept as a challenge and responsibility the deprivations of our relations". 6b

In the altruistic society the people believe in being their brother's keeper.<sup>7a</sup> They believe in being a "friend-in-need" and a "friend indeed".<sup>7b</sup> They believe in giving assistance and in sharing with relations and friends their joys and sorrows. The problem of any member of the family is the problem of the entire family. If a person is successful in life, it is the success of the family. Among Nigerians if one is rich he or she is obliged to help other relatives and friends. If one is poor, he expects assistance from his wealthy relations and friends. The society equally expects a rich person to help the less privileged and needy relations. Basically, wealth is conceived as a blessing from

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6a. Interview information.

6b. Ibid.

7a. To be a "brother's keeper" is a main feature of the extended family system, in which a wealthy/privileged person assists and protects the interests of the less privileged relations or friends, without necessarily expecting a reward.

7b. This explains the altruistic basis of Nigeria's foreign aid without strings and the liberal character of the country's foreign policy.

Above bestowed on the society through certain individuals and groups. There is therefore a divine obligation for the individual or group to apply the wealth for the benefit of others in the family and society. With these beliefs, the average person in Nigeria tries, according to his/her ability to assist the less privileged or needy relations and friends. There is also a philosophy that if through communal help many members of the group are benefited or become rich, then the group will improve more than if only one individual is rich and holds tight to his riches amidst mass poverty. Thus altruism lessens selfishness and exploitation. These values and beliefs influence the making of foreign aid policy and general African policy especially.

Finally both Opposition and the Alliance in the Federal House of Representatives listened with equanimity when on August 5, 1958 the Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa announced that the Federal Government had donated to the United Kingdom Government land and money to build its High Commissioner's Office in Lagos. He told the Parliament:

"We have given the land and we have also agreed to put up the building or to give some money worth a certain type of building standard. I think altogether we said we would be prepared to pay for a house which would cost not more than £40,000. Now, hon. members will agree that it would be very good on the part of Nigeria to show the United Kingdom that we appreciate all that they have done for us". 8a

One easily observes from the records of the House on this issue that there was virtually no mention or demand for a reciprocal gesture from the British Government. At that time, the Federal Government had two consular offices in the UK - London and Edinburgh, for which it hired accommodation there and was paying rent/rates on them. Government's decision to grant land and cash to the British Government was a demonstration of altruism in its pure form.

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8a. Mr. Prime Minister: a Selection of speeches made by Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa; Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos. 1964, p. 20.



Closely related to the altruistic tradition is the influence of religion on the people. The predominance of religious conscience in public life has tended to characterise Nigerians as generally moralistic or should we say religiously sentimental. There appears to be a widespread belief in divine providence and predestination, reinforced by three main religions in Nigeria - Christianity, Islam and Paganism, which emphasise the existence of a Supreme Being who rewards and punishes people for their acts. The belief in "heavenly reward" matches well with the inherent traditional ideas and practices discussed above and therefore combines to provide a basis of behaviour.<sup>8b</sup> Thus Nigerians are usually generous with the hope of heavenly reward. They disapprove generally of reciprocity or 'tit for tat' which is an acceptable act of bilateral relations among nations in the prevailing system of the world. Just as the tradition and custom encourages assistance to less privileged relations/friends without asking for repayment or attaching strings, so also these religions demand from adherents to be kind and generous without expecting reward except from heaven above. As a result, the decisions and actions of most Nigerians, both in their private and public lives, are almost always constrained by the underlying cultural and moral possessions. The emerging attitudes from such possessions are carried forward by the country's leaders in the conduct of their external relations, usually at variance with the pursuit of expediency and narrow self-interest by other actors in the international system.

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8b. See Nnoli Okwudiba, Dr., "The Place of Morals in African Foreign Policy" in Africa Quarterly, vol. XV, Nos. 1 and 11, pp. 48-70.



Religious belief has been such an important factor that Nigeria spends several millions of Naira annually on pilgrimages to Mecca, despite economic austerity measures of the government. It has also established a Pilgrimage Affairs Unit in the Ministry of External Affairs, and enhanced Nigeria's relations with Arab countries for religious rather than economic, political or strategic interests. For example, Saudi Arabia comes next to African countries in importance to the Nigerian government. Both countries are members of OPEC but their bilateral economic activity is infinitesimal and so are areas of political/strategic co-operation. In fact, if they were based on economic, political or strategic interests, Nigeria-Saudi relations would be at a very low level but the interests of Nigeria's Moslem communities have enhanced the relationship. Other examples of religious influence on foreign policy abound. In 1975, the first official visit outside Nigeria by Murtala Muhammed soon after coming into office as the Head of State, was to Saudi Arabia, on a combined pilgrimage and state visit. In 1980, Alhaji Shehu Shagari ordered the opening of a second Nigerian consular office in Saudi Arabia and a substantial increase in the staff strength to cope with demands of Nigerian pilgrims to that country. In 1983, Shagari moved to transfer the Pilgrimage Affairs Unit from the Ministry of External Affairs to the President's Office and to designate it as the Department of Islamic Affairs.<sup>9</sup> This implied elevating relations

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9. The transfer was not effected because that government was overthrown in December 1983, i.e. a few months after initiating the proposal.

between Nigeria and Islamic countries. These examples help to illustrate the extent of religious influence on Nigeria's foreign policy.

Generally, Nigeria's political culture emphasises friendship, mutual co-existence, peaceful settlement of disputes when they arise, moral consideration, respect for human person etc. It denounces violence and war. These values underlie almost all decisions and actions in external affairs. For instance one of the major principles of Nigerian foreign policy is the promotion of international peace and co-operation. There is also hardly any foreign policy statement of Nigeria that does not contain appeal to universal moral principles and terms like world peace, order and justice.<sup>10</sup> Similarly the consideration for world peace and the abhorrence of violence and war led the Gowon government in 1971 to sign the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty despite its realisation "that the treaty is discriminatory in favour of the nuclear powers".<sup>11</sup> Officially the government was advised that "NPT was discriminatory and served the interests of the few haves and held no advantage to the non-nuclear weapon countries".<sup>12</sup> The same moral consideration (to avoid shedding the blood of innocent citizens) partly led that government not to take any retaliatory action against Equatorial Guinea in 1974-75 when several Nigerian citizens in that country were attacked and injured. Also in

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10. For example, see UN General Assembly Record of Proceedings for Nigeria's statements 1960-1984. Also noted in Idang, Gordon J., Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1973, p. 13.

11. West Africa No. 3260, of 14 January 1980, p. 61.

12. Interview information.

1983 during the border conflict between Nigeria and Cameroun, the Shagari government was to some extent influenced by the consideration of inflicting injury on a sister-African country and so did not submit to some domestic pressures for action against Cameroun. Thus, in deciding whether or not to go to war on a given issue, the policy-makers' moral considerations as well as their understanding of the general attitude of Nigerians towards war and its consequences, are brought to bear on such decisions.

The same sentiments also influence decisions to offer assistance to friendly countries, hence Nigeria's aid is without strings. From observation, the common concern of Nigerian decision-makers on foreign aid is about whether a given proposal is just or unjust. If a particular proposal cannot be morally justified, that proposal is rejected. Thus the moral and religious elements inherent in the culture influence the thinking on foreign policy.

The attitude of Nigerian politicians towards government is another source of influence on policy making. This attitude is the product of perhaps ethnic hostility and lack of patriotism, attributable to political culture and socialisation. For example, while in Britain there is respect for the patriotic requirement to uphold the national interest in the face of foreign opposition and to subordinate domestic quarrels to the dictates of national honour, it can be impolitic to oppose the government in times of crisis because of the possible charges of disloyalty; and most British politicians try to abstain from



criticising government policy while travelling abroad.<sup>13</sup>

The contrary is the case in Nigeria - where politicians and even academics use various platforms abroad to criticise government policy and even to plan the overthrow of the government. This means that while in Britain, government leaders can employ the full weight of their political and moral authority in dealing with issues in foreign policy without having to worry very much about pressure from the opposition at the time, in Nigeria every government is not only concerned about internal opposition to external policy but also, because of unbridled ambition for power and perquisites of office, domestic opponents can possibly collude with external forces to bring down the government. Such unpatriotic acts form a part of the negative inputs into foreign policy making and also undermine the image of the country.

Essentially, all individuals in policy making positions bring to that office their experiences and orientations, to guide them in the consideration of various alternatives open to government on given issues. It is difficult to separate the individual orientation, biases and sentiments from the official actions. It is in this light that societal values and influences are believed to influence policy makers' decisions and actions.

#### PUBLIC OPINION

Public opinion is perhaps the most common societal source of input into foreign policy making. Public opinion may reinforce

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13. Vital, D., The Making of British Foreign Policy. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1966, pp. 74-75.

government's pursuit of a given policy or cause a reversal of policy. In Nigeria, there are many ways by which the public express their opinion on issues that are of interest to them. The most popular of these are the media - which include the press, radio and television. Influences from these sources are assumed to reflect more of the desires and expectations of the majority of the citizens, although such influences are often moderated or exaggerated depending on the predispositions of the owners/editors. But the contentious issue about the media as a source of public opinion is that only a small percentage of the Nigerian population could avail itself of the media for expressing opinion on a number of issues. This implies that the views usually expressed in the media are those of the articulate minority of the population - mainly the elite. The media are widely circulated throughout the country and are accepted by many as a source of authentic information. Thus the media are one way of selling to the people the ideas of the elite and making them seem widely held ideas in the country. It is also a very important source of input (influence), as media criticism or praise of a government Minister or policy could hardly be ignored. Reference has and will continue to be made to West African Pilot, Daily Times, New Nigerian, Tribune, Punch, Nigerian Statesman, The Observer, Guardian, West Africa magazine etc. for their editorials and lead-articles on foreign affairs, that make an impression on foreign policy makers. (See here below and chapter 7 (iii) for specific examples).

Another way, perhaps more forceful and direct, of putting across demands and support by the public is through organised interest groups such as business organisations, trade unions, student associations, the Universities etc. Other ways are through such actions as strikes, petitions, protests, demonstrations and revolt. By whatever means chosen at any time to register public disapproval or support, for the conduct of any given foreign business, the fact remains that the Executives are sensitive to shades of adverse opinion. However, the government has the discretion to take its foreign policy decisions in secrecy and according to its choosing but the domestic political implications of such a decision may not, in the nature of things, be secret or concern the government alone. In a radical Nigeria where everybody feels interested and involved, directly or indirectly, in the activities of the government, public demand for adjustment on the part of the decision-makers are usually vehement and could hardly be ignored. Nigerians are neither conservative nor so patient as to wait for election time to vote out unresponsive governments and some governments have been overthrown for allegedly being "insensitive to the true feelings and yearnings of the people".<sup>14</sup>

The importance of public opinion rests on the fact that the people of Nigeria are so very politically aware and active that hardly any government activity could pass unnoticed. Margaret Peil has noted that "we are told that nationalism, democracy, socialism, Christianity are not comprehended by the ordinary

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14. Murtala Muhammed's statement on the overthrow of Gowon's government, 29th July 1975. A similar reason was advanced by Major General Ibrahim Babangida for the overthrow of the Buhari government on 27th August 1985.



Nigerian (Bretton 1962: 44-5), that most people's understanding of the political process is very limited and in general the rural population was below the threshold of political awareness at which it might be mobilized for effective mass political action (Luckham 1971: 271), that national politics were still very remote to most people.... (Post 1963: 383)".<sup>15</sup> However, she continued, "such paternalistic views are unwarranted"<sup>16</sup> for "the Nigerian general public may not be well informed about all the details of Westminster Parliamentaryism (neither is the British general public), but they have a shrewd understanding of their political needs and how to fill them".<sup>17</sup> In effect, therefore, public opinion in Nigeria is quite enlightened and articulate for policy-making.

To buttress the effectiveness of public opinion in Nigeria, the former President (1963-65) Dr. Azikiwe underlined the importance of the media especially the Nigerian press as a significant force in the country's national development.<sup>18</sup> James S. Coleman also wrote about the notable role of the nationalist newspapers in the awakening of nationalist spirit and political consciousness.<sup>19</sup> Writing over a decade later, Guy Arnold said the Nigerian press is among the most outspoken, volatile, witty and free in the world. Its criticisms of

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15. Peil, Margaret, Nigerian Politics - The People's View, Cassell & Company Limited, London, 1976, p. 3.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. A lecture delivered in honour of the first graduating student of the Jackson College of Journalism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, on 31st May 1964. West African Pilot, 3 June 1964.

19. Coleman, J.S., Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960, pp. 184-186.

government and establishment are far-ranging and pointed; its coverage can be exceptionally wide.<sup>20</sup> There never seems to be any inhibitions like government's control of the major sources of precise information on its external behaviour by means of say the Official Secrets law, the Privy Councillor's oath, the D-notices system or the system of press controls that obtain in communist countries. In Britain, for example, there is the Foreign Office system of 'trusties' among the diplomatic correspondents and the subtle but very powerful pressure put on journalists who cause embarrassment i.e. adopt a critical attitude to the conduct of British foreign policy or draw heavily on other sources of information beyond the Foreign Office and a handful of Western embassies.<sup>21</sup> In Nigeria, the contrary is the case. There are wide press criticisms of all aspects of government as well as persistent calls for changes. A few examples will illustrate the role of Nigerian public opinion in foreign policy-making.

In the early sixties, during the proposal for Nigeria-British defence pact, public opinion in Nigeria was mainly responsible for the eventual abandonment of the proposal. Several Nigerian newspapers at the time criticised the government for attempting to commit the country to a defence alliance with the United Kingdom. The most prominent newspapers on this issue were the Nigerian Tribune, the West African Pilot, The Daily Express and the Eastern Outlook. In addition there were protests from the Nigerian Trade Union

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20. Arnold, Guy, op. cit, pp. 163, 172.

21. Vital, David, op. cit., pp. 80-81. However, by 1984, the Buhari military government introduced decree No. 4 on press censorship, for a different purpose. Perhaps it was to suppress the exposure of corruption by members of his government, like the alleged disappearance of Naira 2.8 billion when he was the Commissioner for Petroleum, 1978-79.

Congress, the Labour Congress, the Nigerian Youth Congress and the National Union of Nigerian Students,<sup>22</sup> all against the Defence Pact. Akinyemi (1974) drew attention to "public demonstrations against the government's foreign policies" organised by the Nigerian Youth Congress and said that some of the demonstrations were virulent and violent.<sup>23</sup> Similarly the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS) opposed travel restrictions to the Soviet Union, called for Nigeria's military involvement in the Algerian war of Independence and also demonstrated against the Defence Pact. The West African Pilot, like some other Nigerian newspapers, contributed significantly to the shaping of Nigeria's foreign policy. In one edition, the Pilot wrote:

"LET US AIM AT WORLD PEACE AND FREEDOM.  
Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend or oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty. This much we pledge and more. We pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny".<sup>24</sup>

In another issue, under the headline "RHODESIA BRINGS CRISIS TO AFRICA", it called on the British government to intervene in Southern Rhodesia and to establish a democratic constitution in order to preserve security and peace. It also called for the lifting of the ban on ZAPU, the release of prisoners, the freeing of the exiled and the restricted in that country. The paper finally called on 32 Afro-Asian countries including

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22. Akinyemi, A.B., Foreign Policy and Federalism, op. cit., pp. 33-4.

23. Ibid., p. 33.

24. West African Pilot, Tuesday, 9 October, 1962.



Nigeria for solidarity with the African peoples in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>25</sup> These two issues – the preservation of world peace and freedom and the liberation of African countries from colonial and apartheid rule – have remained the dominant themes in Nigeria's foreign policy. Such press opinions could have influenced, to some extent, subsequent decisions of Nigeria on these issues, such as to mobilise world opinion to support the imposition of sanctions against Rhodesia and South Africa and the former's expulsion from the Commonwealth.

Public opinion continued to be effective under the military governments in Nigeria. For instance, after the 1973 Yom Kippur war in the Middle East, significant public opinion in Nigeria was in sympathy with the Arabs as perhaps with Israel. The National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS), University lecturers and Nigerian newspapers like the Daily Times, New Nigerian, The Observer, The Renaissance, The Chronicle etc. debated the events in the Middle East and severally urged the federal military government to decide one way or the other as Nigeria must not remain neutral in a conflict that had threatened international peace and security. The government then could not take an early decision on what should be Nigeria's stand, because of competing pressures and considerations. It was not until the OAU (of which the Nigerian Head of State, General Gowon, was the Chairman at the time) voted in favour of its members severing diplomatic relations with Israel, that the Nigerian government eventually announced its decision to sever

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25. West African Pilot, October 11, 1962, p. 4.

links with Israel.

In 1975, the U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, wanted to visit Nigeria, but public opinion especially by the media was to a great extent responsible for influencing the government in the decision to turn down the proposal. In early 1976, after a military coup that led to the assassination of Murtala Muhammed, there was alleged involvement of the U.S. and U.K. governments. Public opinion in Nigeria (the press, student organisations, trade unions) urged the government to break relations with both countries. Placard-carrying students marched to the British High Commission in Lagos and the United States Embassy to demonstrate their displeasure with the two countries. Finally the Federal Military Government responded, albeit partially, to public demands by expelling the British High Commissioner in Nigeria and reducing the level of its diplomatic representation in London, to that of a deputy High Commission. Similarly in 1977 when Britain's Foreign Secretary, Dr. David Owen, proposed to visit Nigeria to discuss proposals for settlement of the racial conflict in Zimbabwe, the proposed visit became a subject of debate in Nigerian Universities and on the pages of newspapers as to the need for such a visit. In a paper by Ebow Mensah on "The Struggle in Zimbabwe", he wrote "Two shuttle visits to Southern Africa, the first by Dr. Henry Kissinger, the second by Mr. Ivor Richard, have produced the remarkable result of pushing "a peaceful settlement" in Zimbabwe much farther out of reach than ever before while at the same time affording the rebel regime

in Zimbabwe time and opportunity to consolidate and strengthen its position. On the basis of this experience it seems that some kind of stock-taking and a fresh re-appraisal of the situation must be done on the African side ... A third shuttle diplomacy should not be necessary in order that the real content of the intentions, orientations and objectives of the shuttles can be recognised".<sup>26</sup> The Nigerian Observer, writing on Dr. Owen's proposed visit, had one of its editorials captioned "ENOUGH OF THIS HOLLOW DIPLOMACY".<sup>27</sup> The New Nigerian also wrote in a similar manner in its editorial captioned "UNNECESSARY JOURNEY".<sup>28</sup> However, the Ministry of External Affairs and its Commissioner Joe Garba did not submit to public pressure and so Dr. Owen made his visit to Nigeria. Soon after the visit, some Nigerian newspapers like The Nigerian Observer called on the FMG not to rely on 'cosmetic diplomacy with its flamboyant vanity and deception' but to step up "MEANINGFUL SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION WAR".<sup>29</sup> This newspaper urged that "there can be no going back on the Federal Military Government's commitment to alleviate the suffering of our African brothers undergoing draconian punishment in Southern Africa ... for the liberation of occupied lands in Southern Africa has become an open challenge from which Africa cannot retreat".<sup>30</sup> Such explicit demands by the press constitute part of the vital input into foreign policy-making in Nigeria.

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26. New Nigerian, April 4, 1977, pp, 5, 7 and 11.

27. Nigerian Observer, April 15, 1977, Editorial, p. 3.

28. New Nigerian, April 19, 1977, p. 1.

29. The Nigerian Observer, April 18, 1977, Editorial.

30. Ibid., p. 3.



As we have noted, the Nigerian press is very articulate and daring. It is generally undaunted in its coverage of events and in demands for attention to various issues. Between 1979 and 1981, the crisis in Chad was at its peak and with a spill-over effect on Nigeria due mainly to the influx into Nigeria of Chadian refugees. Nigerian newspapers were relentless in calling on the Federal Government to assist in reconciling the warring factions in Chad. These newspapers, most prominent in this case being the New Nigerian, highlighted, in various editions, the security implications to Nigeria of the crisis in Chad and on many occasions warned of the dangers of delay in halting the escalation of the conflict. The radio and television were simultaneously highlighting the events in Chad and their implications. The pressure of the media was no doubt a factor in the Federal Government's decision to mediate in Chad by inviting to Nigeria the warring factions for the first, second and third "Conferences on the Chadian Crisis"<sup>31</sup> and by sending a peace-keeping force to Chad.

On 16 May 1981 during a border patrol, Camerounian forces fired at and killed five Nigerian soldiers inside Nigeria's territory. The incident generated sustained public debate, some of which deplored the Camerounian action, while others urged Nigeria to revenge, and yet others questioned Nigeria's conception of its foreign policy priorities in Africa. The radio, the television and all Nigerian newspapers, without exception, called on the Federal Government

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31. The Federal Government organised at Nigeria's expense, the first and second Conferences on the Chadian crisis in Lagos and the third in Kano.

to take one form of action or another. The Daily Times and New Nigerian were among those that called on the Nigerian government to exercise restraint over the issue.<sup>32</sup> The different views of the Nigerian public were carefully examined by the National Security Council and the National Defence Council respectively. Both advised the government accordingly and it eventually decided not to take military action against Cameroun for the obvious act of provocation. One of the reasons put forward by the National Security Council in its advice to the government was "evidence from intelligence sources that Western alliance countries would exploit war between Nigeria and Cameroun to divert Africa's attention from the liberation struggle in Southern Africa".<sup>33</sup> In fact the "intelligence sources" were merely newspaper speculations on the likely expectation in the event of a war against Cameroun. The following week, an article in The Punch written by Dr. A.B. Akinyemi dismissed the so-called "intelligence sources" as mere "security blackmail".<sup>34</sup> The point here is that the press is a very important source of input into foreign policy decision-making and sometimes can be regarded as a source of intelligence information upon which foreign policy decisions are based.

In 1982, the Federal Government applied for a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). When the conditions of the loan were made known, the Nigerian public, especially the press, denounced the IMF as an imperialist instrument and urged the

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32. Daily Times, New Nigerian, various issues, May-June 1981.

33. The Punch, 8 June 1981, p. 16.

34. Sunday Punch, 14 June 1981, p. 2.

Federal Government to reject the loan. Since then three successive governments (Shagari, Buhari and Babangida) have been faced with the IMF saga. None of them have been able to submit to the IMF demands, despite the economic problems of the country, because of unrelenting public pressure against the loan. Major General Babangida who took over the Administration on August 27, 1985, has formally called for further public debate on the implications of the IMF loan. He also set up a special task force to co-ordinate the debate and analyse the views of the general public to enable the government to act according to the wishes of the Nigerian public. An observer of the public debate so far has noted that "It is more of a shouting match in which it is more important to have a loud voice...".

"Thus we have had students declare that they will go on strike if an IMF loan is taken; traditional rulers caution that it is unwise, and Church leaders, confessing that all they know about IMF conditionalities is what they have heard members of their congregation say, nevertheless declare that nothing good will come of it. It now remains for the prophets to take over, quoting suitable passages of the Bible and Koran of course, to show how it was foretold that disaster would follow the taking of a loan." <sup>35</sup>

These show how lively and involved public opinion has been in Nigeria on foreign policy matters. In the final analysis, the government will make the decision but whether or not its decision will be in line with the views of the majority, will remain a different point. However, public opinion in Nigeria cannot be completely ignored by the government without being accused, like others before it, of being insensitive to the demands of the majority.

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35. West Africa, No. 3555, 14 October 1985, p. 2141.



Generally, public opinion is an important source of influence on foreign policy machinery.

Foreign policy-makers also value public opinion as a necessary ingredient for their work. In front of Nigeria's Ministry of External Affairs, vendors of various newspapers and magazines gather every morning to sell their papers. Very many foreign service officers buy at least two and often as many as six papers each morning. These are in addition to official supplies of newspapers, usually to Heads of Departments. Relatively junior officers try to read these newspapers early enough so as to be able to draw the attention of their senior colleagues to issues that have bearing on the work of their department or section. To policy-makers generally, newspapers help to define for them the current political universe and also are important sources of political intelligence, i.e. they often turn to the press for general information about the international political environment in which they operate - a view equally held by Rosenau.<sup>36</sup>

The media are obviously a very important source of vital information. There are, however, official channels of information gathering such as the Embassy reports and despatches, which the media supplement. Outlining the importance of the media, which equally applies to Nigeria, Bernard C. Cohen said:

- (1) Policy makers turn to the media for information and for analysis, evaluation of developments, proposals and sometimes even for new ideas on how to deal with the range of problems that confront them.
- (2) They also draw from the press some measure of the importance of events.

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36. Rosenau, J.N. (ed.), International Politics and Foreign Policy, The Free Press of Glencoe Inc., New York, 1961.

- (3) Newspapers represent an informed and articulate segment of public opinion which foreign policy officials can regularly and continuously tap.
- (4) Newspapers offer foreign policy-makers some insight into the way foreign policy issues are perceived and assimilated by others in the domestic environment and in the international arena.<sup>37</sup>

### POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties are important factors in the domestic environment of Nigeria and constitute significant sources of input into foreign policy-making. Parties contribute ideas to policy formation directly as the government-party or indirectly as the opposition. In Nigeria, political parties existed in the first (1960-65) and second (1979-83) Republics but were officially non-existent during the military rule. Since the military has ruled Nigeria for 15 out of the 25 years of the country's sovereign existence, it means that contributions to foreign policy making by political parties have been limited. Nevertheless, their contributions, as earlier noted, have been quite substantial.

The background of political parties in Nigeria in both the first and second Republics has been examined in chapter 2. We noted the effort of every party to formulate and articulate its foreign policy objectives if elected into office and we highlighted the differences and similarities in the proposals. We shall not repeat the analysis here. Our concern in this section is to situate political parties within the domestic environment of Nigeria and to show that the parties are either

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37. Cohen, Bernard C., in Rosenau, *ibid.*, pp. 222-6.

actively involved in or influence the making of the country's foreign policy. In the first and second Republics each of the parties put forward in their manifestos substantive ideas about the country's foreign policy. Initially such ideas seemed a means of convincing the electorate to win votes. But after the elections, the successful party forms the government and also sets up a party committee on foreign affairs. The committee will remain a major source of advice to that government on foreign policy, and sometimes become more influential than other official advisory organs. Then the other parties that have not joined in forming the government will then be in the opposition. Usually the Opposition Party watches curiously the government's foreign policy activities and in the event of faltering, will unleash severe criticism of such government action. Characteristically the Nigerian opposition's criticisms are pointed, savoury and unsavoury, with the tendency to cause the policy-maker to re-evaluate policy decisions or to provide ready rationalisation for such. Indeed, the nature of Nigerian politics (especially the institutionalisation of opposition and cut-throat competition for power) and the inherent radicalism of the society (the ease of mobilising public opposition, demonstration in Universities against government policy and the ease of overthrowing governments) make Nigerian governments and politicians reluctant to ignore or take lightly the views of opposing political parties. Thus, Nigerian political parties, whether in government or opposition, exert commensurate influence on policy-making.



Perhaps specific incidents will help to portray the influence of political parties in foreign policy-making. We may recall, against the risk of repetition, the issue of France's atomic bomb test in the Sahara Desert in the early '60s. All Nigerian political parties were relentless in calling on the government to explore all avenues of preventing the test from being carried out in Africa. Again during the Anglo-Nigerian defence pact, the opposition party led by Chief Awolowo exposed the secret deal to the Nigerian public. While the other parties criticised the Pact, it was the tenacity of the opposition party leadership, supported by the media, student organisations and trade unions that forced the Nigerian government to withdraw from the Pact in 1962. During the second Republic of Nigeria, political parties equally exerted influence on foreign policy-decisions. In the already cited dispute with the Republic of Cameroun in 1981, all five political parties unanimously condemned the "murderous aggression committed by Cameroun against Nigeria".<sup>38</sup> The NPP stalwart, Chief Ume Ezeoke, who was also the Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, made a clarion call on television for a declaration of war on Cameroun. Leading members of other parties (except the ruling NPN) also demanded that government should take action against Cameroun Republic. Chief Awolowo at a radio interview recalled several incidents in which Nigeria had been slapped in the face by African countries and said the only way to deter such hostile acts was by demonstrating that Nigeria can bite. Although, despite these party pressures,

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38. The Punch, June 14, 1981; Daily Times, May-June 1981; National Concord, May-June 1981.

the government decided to the contrary, there is no doubt that the views of the parties were considered before reaching a final decision.

As indicated earlier in this section, another way by which political parties contribute to the foreign policy process is by forming the government. The structure of Nigerian political parties show that within each party are various research groups or committees responsible for specific areas of government activity. The party's committee on foreign affairs advises the party leadership on various issues of foreign policy. Often the committee members bring their experience and influence to bear on the bureaucrats in the Ministry of External Affairs. If they fail to change the views of the bureaucrats, they might use their influence as the ruling party to pressurise the Executive to accept the party's point of view. For instance in the Cameroun incident, public opinion in Nigeria at that time was charged with demand for a retaliatory measure, the ruling party's Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, made through the Press a call on "Nigerians to contain their emotions over the current misunderstanding between this country and Cameroun".<sup>39</sup> From these instances, it is clear that political parties are important factors in the domestic environment that influence foreign policy-making.

Generally, therefore, Nigerian political parties contribute to foreign policy making through (a) initiating and proposing foreign policy objectives as possible government elect; (b) criticism and opposition of the government's foreign policy

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39. New Nigerian, June 11, 1981, p. 3.

posture; (c) participation in policy formulation if elected into power and (d) through influencing policy in advisory capacity or by access to the corridors of power. Political party contributions and pressure or demand and support form only a part of the inputs into foreign policy-making. When these are placed with other demands and support from the media, the trade unions, student organisations etc., then all inputs jostle for attention and consideration, thereby generating pressure on the foreign policy machinery.

### THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Another important domestic source of input into foreign policy-making is the National Assembly. Like the political parties, the National Assembly came into existence for the limited periods of the first and second Republics, when Nigeria had constitutionally elected governments. The National Assembly is the legislative organ of the government in Nigeria. It is a glorified and honourable institution, made up of the widest possible representation of the people and its members are regarded as honourable citizens. The legislation occupies a revered institutional position in the political process. It can therefore be argued that it is a major part of the machinery of foreign policy-making while the opposite view is that the legislature merely exercises influence on the making of foreign policy (i.e. it is just a source of input).

Essentially, the former believes that the Legislature has some statutory roles in foreign policy-making which make it a participant in the process. In Nigeria's first and second



Republics, the Constitution (1963) vested the parliament with the power to make laws "for the peace, order and good government of Nigeria"<sup>40</sup> and "... for the purpose of implementing any treaty, convention or agreement between the Federation and any other country or any arrangement with or decision of an international organisation of which the Federation is a member".<sup>41</sup> This provision is incorporated in the 1979 constitution. The scope of the Parliament's constitutional function implied in the provision is wide. As Nigeria enters into a series of bilateral agreements with many countries on economic, scientific and cultural matters, the ratification of each agreement requires the consent of the Assembly. Nigeria's membership of ECOWAS, OAU, OPEC, Commonwealth, Non-aligned Movement and UNO from which various treaties and conventions emerge from time to time, implies that before any formal commitment of Nigeria is made, the Assembly has to scrutinize the particular instrument and thereafter decide to grant consent or not. It is argued that this is in essence direct parliamentary involvement in foreign policy making.

Article 77 of the constitution (1963) provided that "Parliament may make laws for Nigeria or any part thereof with respect to trade and commerce between Nigeria and other countries and ... including the export of commodities from Nigeria, the import of commodities into Nigeria, the establishment and enforcement of grades and standards of quality for commodities

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40. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos, 1963, section 69.

41. Ibid, section 74.

to be exported from Nigeria...". It is thus argued that as economic considerations are integral parts of the foreign policy, the organ that makes law or defines the direction and nature of external economic activities of the state is involved in foreign policy. Other statutory functions of the National Assembly tend to buttress this argument. Article 5:3 of the constitution (1979) provided that "(a) the President shall not declare a state of war between the Federation and another country except with the sanction of a resolution of both Houses of the National Assembly sitting in session; and (b) except with the prior approval of the Senate, no member of the armed forces of the Federation shall be deployed on combat duty outside Nigeria".<sup>42</sup> The implications of these provisions are obvious. Specifically it makes the Executive depend on the approval of the Legislature in order to embark on the principal objective of Nigeria's foreign policy, which is "the defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity".<sup>43</sup> It can be argued that whoever approves a given policy makes the policy, for without such approval it will not become policy and will have no effect.

In a similar argument over the US congress, Lloyd Jensen wrote that the view that the Legislature has been systematically excluded by the Executive from all foreign policy arenas is not supported by the data. Although the trend in most states is one of ever-increasing power to the executive at the expense of legislative and other groups, legislative bodies, he said, "often share in the treaty-making process and approve foreign

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42. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos, 1979, section 5:3.

43. Federal Ministry of Information, News Release No. 780, Lagos, June 29, 1976.

policy appointments. They usually play an important role in the budgetary process and share in the ultimate decision to engage in war".<sup>44</sup> Despite some variations between nations, Jensen said "the consensus is that the Legislative body plays a limited role in the making of foreign policy".<sup>45</sup>

The opposite view contends that foreign policy making is an executive responsibility while the Legislature acts more or less as an influencer through constitutional checks, parliamentary enactments, budgetary controls and committee debates on the foreign policy posture adopted by the Executive. It assumes that the views of the Legislature on foreign policy perhaps like other interest groups, may be accepted or rejected by the Executive. Nevertheless, it is in the interest of the Executive to lobby and persuade the Legislature to agree with them. Another point is that the Executive in modern governments has become very powerful at the expense of the Legislature. This implies that because of the dominant influence of the Executive on state matters, the role of parliament in the making of foreign policy has therefore declined, as a world-wide phenomenon. Even in countries where parliamentary democracy flourishes, "the formal institutional functions of parliament have been reduced to approving or rejecting the government's policy and to influencing, in a very clumsy way, the formulation and execution of that policy".<sup>46</sup> To illustrate the point, Keatinge cited the cases of the British government's

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44. Lloyd Jensen, Explaining Foreign Policy, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982, p. 120.

45. Ibid.

46. Keatinge, Patrick, "The formulation of Irish foreign policy" Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1973, p. 41.



invasion of Suez in 1956 which caused parliamentary revolt and the American government's handling of the Cuban crisis of 1961 without due consultation of the Congress, as instances where governments have ignored parliament.

In Nigeria, the role of the parliament in the political process has declined tremendously due to the frequent military interventions that have reduced the life of Nigerian Legislatures and also the dominant influence of the Executive over the Legislature as a global phenomenon. Based on this line of argument, the National Assembly (Nigerian Legislature) is considered here as an influencer (not maker) of foreign policy.

In the first and second Republics of Nigeria, the National Assembly or Parliament as it was called in the first Republic, consisted of "the President, the Senate and the House of Representatives"<sup>47</sup> and was vested with the power to make laws for Nigeria for the purpose of implementing any treaty, convention or agreement between the Federation and any other country.<sup>48</sup> To emphasise the obvious, this provision is for the purpose of making laws to guide the makers of foreign policy in their formulation and practice of the country's external policy. The scope of Nigeria's external involvement coupled with its clear-cut, that is consistent, non-hypocritical, external behaviour, are such as not to necessitate frequent recourse to the National Assembly. Some incidents that could have clearly put the National Assembly into the foreign policy picture either occurred during the absence of the National Assembly or were

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47. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1963, section 41 and 1979, section 42.

48. Ibid., sections 74 (1963) and 104 (1979).

left to run out of steam. Examples include Nigeria's signature to the non-proliferation treaty (1971), peace-keeping operations in Chad (1979), the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) question (1984) and the border dispute with the Cameroun Republic (1981), referred to earlier. In the latter case, the parliament had a constitutional role to play if Nigeria was to take retaliatory measures against the Cameroun Republic. Article 5:3 of the constitution (1979) forbade the President from deploying any Nigerian soldier abroad without legislative approval. In that case the National Assembly could have prepared such a resolution as required by Article 5:3 of the constitution and followed it up by a constitutional amendment deleting Article 5:3 thus making it possible for the President to respond to such emergencies. Attention was drawn to this role but the National Assembly backed away from it.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless there are many ways by which the National Assembly influences foreign policy-making. These include individual members taking various opportunities to articulate their views on foreign policy matters and being elected representatives; such views are not totally ignored; also through the discussions and resolutions of the Committee on Foreign Relations as well as during the National Assembly debates on foreign policy issues. Claude S. Philips illustrated the role of parliament in the 1960s in foreign policy-making. He cited, for example, the debates in the House of Representatives on the Anglo-Nigeria defence pact;<sup>50</sup> on the relations with the

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49. Sunday Punch, June 14, 1981, p. 2.

50. Claude S. Philips, op. cit., pp. 42 - 48

USSR and other Communist countries;<sup>51</sup> on the adoption of the principle of non-alignment and Nigeria's African policy, etc. The debates on these issues in the House of Representatives helped to guide the government in its eventual adoption of foreign policy objectives. The indomitable and fearless opposition in the National Assembly was such that the Assembly's views on foreign policy could not be ignored.

In the second Republic, the National Assembly was again more or less divided into the government party and the opposition with the latter made up of almost the same group of people who formed the opposition in the first Republic. The Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly debated exhaustively in 1980, issues like relations with Israel and South Africa. Some members led by Dr. Jaja Wachukwu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, wanted Nigeria to open diplomatic relations with both Israel and South Africa. They argued that such a relationship would afford Nigeria the opportunity to discuss and convince the governments of the two countries as to the futility of the policies of zionism and apartheid. This proposal against the prevailing policy of no compromise with apartheid and zionism might have accounted for Dr. Wachukwu being unsuccessful in his bid for the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The Committee was essentially the Assembly's watchdog on the foreign policy activities of the Executives. Its discussions and criticisms or resolutions were referred to the Executive.

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51. Ibid., pp. 56-59, 60-64, 101-106.



Again the Committee on Foreign Relations played a major role in screening the Presidential nominees for Ambassadorial appointments. By this means of approving or rejecting the appointment of a principal envoy abroad the Committee influenced foreign policy-making and implementation. When the Committee's work is submitted to the National Assembly for debate, the issue is further elaborated and more parliamentarians take part in the debate. Views raised in the Assembly on relevant matters are passed for the attention of the Executive. In addition, there is in the Ministry of External Affairs, a National Assembly Liaison Unit whose staff go to the Assembly on a daily basis to record and report to the Ministry any debate on matters of external policy. There are also official records of the National Assembly debates and occasionally the Ministry is invited to send representatives to the Assembly when substantive matters concerning its work are to be debated. Through these means, the views of the National Assembly are fed into the machinery of foreign policy-making.

### THE ECONOMY

The national economy is another important source of input into foreign policy-making in Nigeria. It determines how much money is available for foreign affairs. If Nigeria's economic capacity is low, there will be less money for the pursuit of foreign policy and if the economic position is high, then more money will be devoted to foreign

policy. A stable economic base is necessary for effective pursuit of the country's external policy. Nigeria has a tremendous physical resource base which supports its steadily growing, activist and purposeful foreign policy.

As already indicated in Chapter 2(i), Nigeria is well endowed with land area, natural and human resources necessary for rapid socio-economic growth. Its land area makes possible the production of a wide range of agricultural commodities and offers space for development projects. According to Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Nigeria's population is made up of one of the most resourceful people that can be found anywhere.<sup>52</sup> The government employs the foreign policy personnel from the country's large labour force. The supply of the necessary personnel is among the vital inputs into policy-making. The growth of the Nigerian population with abundant skilled labour is an indication of the country's strong economic capacity. Despite the drift to the private sector for more attractive remuneration and the massive retirements of 1975 and 1984, there has been a regular supply of qualified personnel to the foreign service. There are, however, problems arising from faulty methods of recruitment, placement and postings of foreign policy staff (see Chapter 9A ~~and~~ 3(i) and (ii)). Another indicator of economic growth is the rapid increase in the production of goods and services in Nigeria. For example, at independence, the gross domestic product, which measures total production of goods and services in the economy, was about #3,142.4 million.<sup>53</sup> By 1970 the

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52. "Nigeria's Economic Position Today", text of a broadcast on the National Network of Radio Nigeria by Dr. Adebayo Adedeji, Federal Commissioner for Economic Development and Reconstruction, on the occasion of the 13th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria, Lagos, in October 1973, p. 1.

53. See Table 2 in Part I, Chapter 2.

GDP (at current factor cost) was ₦5,281 million and by 1980 it rose to ₦43,280 million.<sup>54</sup> This reflects a substantial growth of the Nigerian economy, from which funds are made available for formulation and implementation of the country's foreign policy.

Despite the apparent economic growth, Nigeria's level of development, in comparison with the industrialised countries like the USA, USSR, Japan and UK, is still quite low. For instance the per capita income in Nigeria is comparatively small. The standard of living is poor. According to Douglas Rimmer, "material welfare, even of the most elementary kind, is far from abundant in Nigeria, and that most Nigerians are relatively impoverished in their money-earnings, health, housing, sanitation and access to water and lighting".<sup>55</sup> There is also a very slow pace of industrialisation and technological development, due primarily to mismanagement and ill-equipped leadership which Nigeria has had since independence. The very low level of development in Nigeria affects to a considerable extent, how much attention and resources that government can devote to external affairs.

However, there has been continuous effort by Nigerians to accelerate real growth in the economy. This effort is reflected in the first post-independence Six-Year Development Plan 1962/68. The full implementation of that plan to revolutionise the economy and introduce structural changes, was interrupted by the military intervention and subsequent

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54. Central Bank of Nigeria: Economic and Financial Review, volume 19, No. 2, December 1981.

55. Kirk-Greene, Anthony and Rimmer, Douglas, Nigeria since 1970 - A Political and economic outline, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1981, p. 66.



civil war. At the end of the war (1970), the Federal Military Government launched the Second National Development Plan 1970/74. During the period, the economy made reasonable progress, aided by the sudden increase in the revenue from exports of crude oil, especially in the 1973-75 period.<sup>56</sup> As revenue continued to increase, there was greater determination and a general tone of optimism to force the pace of growth in the economy. Thus in March 1975, the Federal Military Government launched a thirty billion naira (third) National Development Plan, 1975-80. This plan was overshadowed by the coup of July 29, 1975 and the new Military Government's preparations to return the country to a constitutionally elected government by 1979. By 1981, Nigeria had its fourth National Development Plan, 1981-86, which has been dominated by the unprecedented commitment of the national leadership to transfer the federal capital to Abuja. A substantial amount of Nigeria's revenue since 1980 has been purportedly diverted towards the development of the Abuja capital territory. The various economic programmes of the government appear ambitious but are indications of a healthy performance of the economy.

Obviously there has been a massive increase in the revenue earnings of the Federal Government since independence,<sup>57</sup> but it has not resulted in a commensurate high level of industrialisation and social services. However, it has given rise to a

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56. After the Yom Kippur War, October 1973, the Arab countries imposed an oil embargo against selected NATO countries. This led to scarcity and unprecedented increase in the market price of oil. Nigeria then increased its production of oil from which it received much revenue.

57. See "Current Revenue of the Federal Government" in Central Bank of Nigeria, Economic and Financial Review, vol. 20, No. 1, June 1982, p. 74. Also vol. 8, Nos. 1-2, June 1970, pp. 128-136. Despite the glut in the oil market since 1982, rapid growth rate has become a feature of the Nigerian economy.

reasonable improvement on the 1960 level and the economy has acquired its own momentum for growth. The overall effect on policy makers of the huge revenues from the economy is the increase of optimism and confidence reflected in the country's external relations. Nigeria's financial prosperity also explains the increased financial assistance to foreign governments and organisations (see chapter 10 on Nigeria's practice of foreign aid).

Essentially, the low productivity of agriculture and slow pace of industrialisation constitute a major drag on the economy, and affect the amount of funds that would otherwise be available for policy planning and development. On the other hand, the huge proceeds from exports (especially oil) has made available substantial revenue for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

Generally, we have examined in this section five identifiable sources of input into foreign policy-making. These are mainly from the domestic environment. In the next chapter we will try to examine the sources of input from the external environment of Nigerian foreign policy.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

As we noted in the last chapter, the environment of foreign policy-making is an all embracing, supra-system. But for the purpose of analysis, we decided to classify the environment into two - the domestic and external environments. The former has been discussed. So in this chapter, we will examine the external environment of Nigerian foreign policy, with a view to identifying and analysing the major sources of input and types of input into foreign policy making. Before that, we will try to explain what we mean by "the external environment" of Nigerian foreign policy.

Nigeria is an actor in the international system and within the international system, there are many other actors.<sup>1</sup> These include sovereign states, international organisations, multinational corporations, stateless persons and liberation movements, who are participants in international politics. These actors relate and interact with one another bilaterally and multilaterally. A combination of multilateral and bilateral relations among these actors constitutes the international system. The international system itself and the actors in the system form the external environment of Nigerian foreign policy. As participants, the actors are in systemic interaction with Nigeria. As a result, Nigeria receives at times, through

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1. See "Actors in the Modern International System" in Ofoegbu, Ray; Foundation Course in International Relations for African Universities, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1980, pp. 30-35.



some of their decisions and actions, considerable support and encouragement which enables it to operate as effectively as possible. At other times, they exert pressures or make demands that influence the decisions and actions of Nigeria on a variety of issues in the world. For example international organisations such as the UN, OAU, OPEC etc. influence the policies and behaviour of their member states through such organisations' decisions, agreements, resolutions and recommendations. In effect, the international system through the collective action of the actors in it, defines the norms of behaviour for actors in interaction, thereby setting the parameters of the environment within which members operate. To put it simply, pressures and demands arising from the international system have considerable influence on an actor's decision to adopt a given position in external affairs.

Nigeria, being an actor in the international system, belongs to some organisations and maintains certain relationships that have become dominant factors in its external environment. These dominant factors are the main external sources of input into Nigeria's foreign policy. They include: the ECOWAS, the River Niger Commission, Lake Chad Basin Commission, OAU, UNO, OPEC, IBRD (World Bank), IMF, Commonwealth and Non-aligned Movement. Others include substantial bilateral relations especially with the big powers and Africa. All these can be classified into four spheres

of influence as:- the regional (West African), Continental, global and the bilateral spheres. However, we will discuss below a few of these external environmental factors.

### THE REGIONAL SPHERE

The West African region is Nigeria's immediate external environment and a major sphere of influence. The region has been regarded as the most strategic area in terms of national security. If one accepts the dictum that 'Charity begins at home', then Nigeria must, of necessity, take into account events in the immediate environment. It has to ensure amity and cooperation so as to avert the use of neighbouring countries for possible subversion or threat of it by any external aggressor. It is the view here that all countries in West Africa are strategically and economically important to Nigeria. Therefore, their relationship with Nigeria as well as extra-African powers are of vital interest to Nigeria. As earlier noted, Nigeria occupies a unique position in the region and that position imposes some obligations such as the need for close cooperation and collaboration with other countries in the region on international, economic, political and security matters, if the stability of the region is to be maintained.

However, in the first Republic (1960-65) the Federal Government seemed not to attach much importance to Nigeria's immediate external environment. This is evidenced by the discrepancies among the political parties on the type of association to maintain with West African countries (see chapter 2). But since the end of the civil war in 1970,

Nigerian governments have shown increased awareness of the vital importance of the region. According to Aluko, the Nigerian government's role in the formation of the Chad Basin Commission, the River Niger Commission and ECOWAS have shown clearly that Nigerian leaders are aware of the vital importance of this area.<sup>2</sup> Recently the Head of State, Major General Buhari stressed the importance to national security and well-being of Nigeria's immediate neighbours. He said:

"... the national economic and security interests of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, are inextricably tied up with the security, the stability and the economic and social well-being of our immediate neighbours. One of our principal priorities is to put on a more constructive footing relations with our neighbours with whom we share identical goals of regional stability and peace.

This Administration has maintained a high degree of cooperation with the Republics of Benin, Niger, Chad and the Cameroun. The recent four-nation mini-summit in Lagos embracing Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana is an extension of this inner circle of relationships to ensure our collective and individual security and prosperity".<sup>3</sup>

The statement shows that Nigeria's immediate external environment is of primary concern and consideration in the government's thinking. However, the countries in the region are economically and militarily weak. They depend to a considerable extent on external sources for the needs of national defence. As such, they are susceptible to external pressure on matters requiring united action. The implications of these are the major concerns of the Nigerian government, which consequently devotes much time and resources to improving relations with its neighbours and promoting economic development and

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2. Aluko, O; Essays on Nigerian Foreign Policy; George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1981, pp. 266-267.

3. Buhari Muhammadu (Major-General); Annual Foreign Policy Speech, delivered at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 3 December 1984.



regional self-reliance.

Efforts in this direction have resulted in the establishment of regional organisations/commissions which have become dominant factors that also generate substantial input into the making of Nigeria's foreign policy. These are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the River Niger Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. We will discuss these briefly below.

#### ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

Nigeria's role in the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was a bold effort in regional economic cooperation, aimed at creating a common market of West African States. It has since become evident that most West African countries can achieve substantial material progress through regional economic cooperation. Since 1972, Nigeria and Togo have been in the forefront of the effort to bring about regional economic integration of West African States. In May, 1975, fifteen countries in the region signed the Treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States.<sup>4</sup> Member countries including Nigeria resolved to promote the harmonious economic development of their states through effective economic cooperation and collective self-reliance. Article 2(1) of the Treaty establishing the Community provides as its aims "to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural

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4. The original 15 members were Benin Republic, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea (Conakry), Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Upper Volta. Since its inception, one other country, Cape Verde, has joined the Organisation bringing the membership to 16.

resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples". This provision of the Treaty obviously summarises the overriding objectives and commitments to development of all West African States since their attainment of independence. The Community's pursuit of the principles of collective action and self-reliance or indeed the whole concept of regional economic integration of West Africa has been a subject of considerable discussion and debate in some economic and political literature.<sup>5</sup> Nigeria's decision to give full support to the formation and growth of ECOWAS means that time and resources will be devoted to regional integration. This is evident in Nigeria's initiatives and direct involvements in resolving the barriers to integration and also by the large amount of Nigeria's resources devoted to the Community. Nigeria is the largest contributor to the budget of the Economic Community of West African States. It also contributes the highest amount to the Community's fund for development. According to the financial Controller of ECOWAS, Nigeria provides 31% of the annual budget

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5. Abangwu, G.C., "Systems Approach to Regional Integration in West Africa", Journal of Common Market Studies XIII. 1975; Olofin Sam, "Trade Preferences and Economic Integration in West Africa"; unpublished paper presented at the 5th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Society of International Affairs, Nov. 20-22, 1975. University of Lagos; Adebayo Adedeji, "Economic Community of West African States: Ideals and Realities", Nigerian Trade Journal, 22 (April-June 1975) and Eghosa Osagie, "Monetary Disintegration and Integration in West Africa", Nigerian Journal of International Studies, I, July 1975 pp. 12-27; Folayan Ojo, "Economic Community of West African States in the New International Economic Order" and Abdul A. Ialloh, "Recent Trends in Regional Integration in Africa" both in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 6 Nos. 1 and 2, 1980. Also Ashok Kumar and Eghosa Asagie, "Problems of the Economic Community of West African States" and Okon Udokang, "Nigeria and ECOWAS: economic and political implications of regional integration" both in Akinyemi (ed.), Nigeria and the World, op. cit.



(Ivory Coast, the next largest contributor, gives 12.6%) while its (Nigeria) contribution to the fund for development stands at 32% (Ivory Coast 23%) of the total.<sup>6</sup> These contributions are obvious demands on the limited funds available. Similar demands are made on the foreign policy structures which have to convince the government every year to allocate more funds to external affairs.

On the other hand, if the objectives of ECOWAS are achieved, Nigeria hopes to derive some benefits that will boost its national economy and also prestige in the world.

Having examined Nigeria's role in ECOWAS, Dr. Okon Udokang argued that "Nigeria's national interests - the development and expansion of its economy, the raising of the standard of living of its population, and the future physical security of its territory - can only be effectively secured through joint programmes of balanced production, distribution and consumption of goods and services on a regional basis".<sup>7</sup> He pointed out specifically that Nigeria has been motivated by the realisation that regional free trade is a healthy stimulus to balanced economic development; that the Community will provide a ready market for its (Nigeria) industrial products; that it can invest directly in the production of raw materials, food and in secondary industries in other member countries of the Community (for example, in the iron ore project in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, to supplement local sources of iron ore for its Iron and Steel Industry).<sup>8</sup>

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6. Daily Sketch January 23, 1979.

7. Udokang Okon; "Nigeria and ECOWAS: the economic and political implications of regional integration", in Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World: Readings in Nigerian Foreign Policy, The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1978, p.76.

8. Ibid., pp. 74-77.



Undoubtedly, all member states of ECOWAS could derive important economic benefits if the policies of the Community are implemented, like the elimination of tariff barriers and other trade restrictions. Before such benefits can be realised a number of problems must be resolved. These include the narrow range of products that could complement instead of compete with each other, the differences in monetary and fiscal policies of the member states, and the inadequate infrastructures that could impede the growth of inter-regional trade within ECOWAS. For example the internal and international road system within the ECOWAS area is not well developed. Existing harbours are inadequate for handling large imports and exports of goods. The posts and telecommunications systems are slow. Also banking systems are inefficient. Added to these, are abysmal internal and external political interests that constitute impediments to ECOWAS. To eliminate most of these problems demands from member states enormous sacrifices in human and material resources. It also demands both individual and combined efforts to improve the range of industrial products of the member states, the volume of trade and the purchasing power in the Community. Nigeria's interest in the region is far beyond a narrow state interest and includes the interests of other states in the region.

#### THE RIVER NIGER COMMISSION

The economic and geographical importance of the River Niger to Nigeria has made the River Niger Commission a major

factor in Nigeria's external environment. The Commission was started in 1963, with a view to establishing a regime for the River Niger. Membership of the Commission is composed of 8 states; Cameroon, Benin Republic, Guinea (Conakry), Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Upper Volta. However, Chad which used to be the 9th member, recently decided to withdraw. The Secretariat of the Commission is based in Niamey. There is no doubt about the importance of the River Niger to the economic development of the countries through which it flows, and in fact to the whole of the West African region. Nigeria is located at the tail end of the river and the important Kainji Dam is situated on this river. Much of Nigeria's agricultural export crops from the northern states are transported via the River Niger to the coast for shipment. Some fishing is also done on the river and its water is used for irrigation of surrounding farmlands. For these reasons, it is of particular interest to Nigeria that a Commission be established to monitor and control activities on the river. To realise this interest the Ministry of External Affairs' Department of International Economic Co-operation in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources are directly involved in the activities of the Commission. Though the Commission has its problems, mainly financial and administrative, there is a determined effort by Nigeria to ensure that the Commission functions properly so as to achieve the economic benefits derivable from the river.

## LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION

The Lake Chad Basin Commission is another important regional multilateral organisation in which Nigeria has to play an active role. The LCBC was established by the "Convention and Statute Relating to the Development of the Chad Basin",<sup>9</sup> which came into being in May, 1964, with its signing by the Second Chad Conference of Heads of State. The membership of the Basin Commission is composed of Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad. The Executive Secretariat of the Commission is at N'Djamena in Chad. The Lake Chad Basin Commission has been functioning fairly well in harnessing the resources of the Chad Basin in agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and fisheries. The funding of the Basin Commission is through (i) recurrent budget contributed on the basis of equality of member states, (ii) Chad Basin Development Fund contributed in the ratio of 1/1,000 of each member's national budget — In 1974/75, Nigeria contributed 75% of the fund, (iii) external financial and technical assistance.<sup>10</sup> The continued development of the Lake Chad Basin is in the national interest of Nigeria and its neighbours who stand to benefit by harnessing and developing the Basin's potentialities for increased food production. Nigeria's role according to Ofoegbu is a practical expression of its interest and involvement in African co-operation and it enables Nigeria to contribute in promoting the capacity of its neighbours to feed themselves.<sup>11</sup>

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9. Federal Ministry of Justice; Nigeria's Treaties in Force, 1960-1968, Lagos, pp. 217-224.

10. Ofoegbu, Ray Mazi; "The Chad Basin Commission" in Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World, op. cit., pp. 82-3.

11. Ibid., p. 91.



In a nutshell, Nigeria's membership of ECOWAS, the River Niger Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission have implications for the country's foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> First, a substantial part of the resources - personnel, money and materials, available for external affairs are directed towards the needs and demands of the regional organisations. Second, concerted diplomatic efforts are made to keep the members together and to ensure the success of the organisations. Third, membership of the organisations implies joint action by the states to safeguard the security of the region as well as the economic, political and social well-being of their peoples. In this regard, there is need for closer co-operation between the respective agencies of government and also need for restraint in their activities to avoid upsetting the already established relationships among the states in the region. Fourth, to attain the objectives of these organisations and maintain regional stability, entails constant surveillance of the activities of neo-colonialist agents and endeavours to avert extra-regional intervention. Thus any regional policy must take these facts into consideration. This means that Nigeria or indeed any other country, has not complete freedom of action in external affairs, even within its immediate external environment.

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12. See Okon Udokang, "Nigeria and ECOWAS: economic and political implications of regional integration", in Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World - Readings in Nigerian Foreign Policy. University Press Limited, Ibadan, 1980, pp. 57-81.

## THE CONTINENTAL SPHERE AND OAU

Africa is the cornerstone, some will prefer to call it the centre-piece, of Nigerian foreign policy. This means that Africa occupies a central focus in Nigeria's foreign policy formulation and execution. From this perspective, said one Nigerian, "our foreign policy can be described as the pursuit of a combination of all our national interests as well as the interests of Africa as a whole".<sup>13</sup> Truly Nigeria has demonstrated substantial interest in African affairs through the Organisation of African Unity, assistance to liberation movements, peaceful resolution of inter-African disputes, fostering economic co-operation among African countries and aid. A close examination of Nigeria's role in Africa will highlight the magnitude of input from this environment into the country's foreign policy making.

## THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)

The Organisation of African Unity has been an important factor, perhaps the most dominant factor politically, in the external environment of Nigeria. It was established at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963 by the Governments of thirty-one African States in the patriotic endeavour to ensure the survival of the continent as a viable economic and political entity. Nigeria is a founder member of the OAU and played a leading role in its formation.<sup>14</sup> Since then, Nigeria has remained

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13. Osobase, L.S.M. (Ambassador), "The Place of Africa in Nigeria's foreign policy", being a lecture at the 17th Induction Course for newly recruited Foreign Service Officers, Lagos, 6th June 1979, p. 1.

14. For more details about the OAU, see Thompson, V.B, Africa and Unity, Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, London, 1969. Also Cervenka Zdenek, The Organisation of African Unity and Its Charter, C. Hurst & Company, London, 1969 and The Unfinished Quest for Unity: Africa and the OAU, Friedmann Publishers Ltd., London, 1977.

committed to the survival of the organisation as the only rallying point for all African countries. The history of Africa as the most Balkanised and exploited of continents, and the urgent need for a high degree of co-operation among African states, if the continent is to achieve freedom and prosperity, have combined to make the survival and success of the OAU a major objective of Nigeria's African policy.

A close examination of the purposes and principles of the Organisation of African Unity will reveal its intrinsic appeal to Nigeria and why successive governments in Nigeria have reaffirmed commitment to the organisation. According to Article II of the Charter,

"The Organisation shall have the following purposes: (a) to promote the unity and solidarity of the African states; (b) to co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa; (c) to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and independence; (d) to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and (e) to promote international co-operation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".<sup>15</sup>

These are similar to the objectives of Nigeria in external affairs (see section 4). Nigerian leaders have been espousing them publicly at conferences before and after independence. Specifically, these purposes are in accord with the objectives of Nigeria's intra-African policy. It then means that activities of the OAU in these areas will complement those of Nigeria and vice versa. Thus, there is no doubt that the similarity in objectives added much to the commitment of Nigeria to the Organisation.

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15. Charter of the Organisation of African Unity; Purposes, Article II, Addis Ababa, May 1963.



The Charter of the Organisation of African Unity imposes extra obligations on Nigeria for several reasons. It has been known that before the establishment of the OAU the Federal Government of Nigeria took the initiative to organise in Lagos a number of preliminary conferences of the Heads of African and Malagasy States Organisation (January, June and December 1962). The agreements at these conferences form the main body of the Charter. Hence it can be said that the OAU was conceived in Lagos and born in Addis Ababa. According to Stremlau, "eighteen months before the OAU was formed, the Federal Government invited all independent African states to meet in Lagos where, in Ghana's absence, a tentative agreement was reached on the formula for the OAU Charter."<sup>16</sup> He further indicated that the principles of the Organisation were prepared by Nigeria and adopted by the member-states as Article III of the Charter, as follows:

"The member states, in pursuit of the purposes stated in Article II, solemnly affirm and declare their adherence to the following principles:  
 (1) the sovereign equality of all member states;  
 (2) non-interference in the internal affairs of states; (3) respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each member state and for its inalienable right to independent existence;  
 (4) peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration; (5) unreserved condemnation, in all its forms, of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring states or any other states; (6) absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent; (7) affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs".<sup>17</sup>

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16. Stremlau, John J., The Internal Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1977, p. 15.

17. OAU Charter, op. cit., Article III.

Stremiau noted that with the exception of one principle, which was replaced by that affirming "a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs", the seven points proposed by Nigeria reappeared almost verbatim as the principles of the OAU.<sup>18</sup> As Nigeria put so much into the establishment of the Organisation it therefore has an extra obligation to prevent its demise. Secondly, Nigeria being an architect of African unity through functional co-operation, is obliged to uphold the principles and purposes of the OAU, in order to encourage less committed African states to do the same. Third, Nigeria's advocacy of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, restated in Article III(2), poses a serious problem for both the Organisation and Nigeria on issues requiring intervention (see next paragraph for examples). Although the essence of the principle in my view, is to emphasise the necessity for mutual respect and good relations among African states, the Charter failed to preclude actions by individual states that run counter to the principles and purposes of the Organisation and considered by the appropriate principal institution (e.g. the Assembly of Heads of State and Government) to be detrimental to African unity. There should have been a provision for determining at which point an issue would cease to be a domestic affair and become one for OAU intervention. The absence of such provision helps to weaken the OAU, to the dismay of the advocates of unity. Fourth, the Organisation imposes

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18. Stremiau, John J., op. cit., p. 16.

substantial financial obligations on Nigeria. It is one of the largest contributors to the Organisation's funds. Finally, because of the commitment and interest in the success of the Organisation, Nigeria is involved in almost all committees of the OAU and it is looked to for initiative in most inter-African affairs. These obligations and demands cannot but influence her external posture.

Apart from the demands of the OAU, Africa's 'political fortune' and historical circumstances combine to make the influence of the continent on Nigeria's foreign policy a real necessity. The recognition of the implications to Nigeria of the enormous problems in Africa led to the provision in section 19 of the 1979 Constitution, under the 'Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy' that Nigeria will promote African unity as well as the total political, economic and cultural liberation of Africa and the elimination of racial discrimination in all its manifestations.<sup>19</sup> The Federal Government has declared Nigeria's commitment to "the total liberation of Africa, the eradication of the inhuman system of apartheid, the social and economic well-being of the People of this continent and the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of African states".<sup>20</sup> But to achieve these objectives, Nigeria does not have complete freedom of action. It needs the co-operation of other African countries, who may or may not be willing to do so. It will be difficult for Nigeria to try to ignore the rights and wishes of these

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19. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos.

20. Buhari, Muhammadu (Major-General), Annual Foreign Policy Speech, 1984, op. cit.



countries on many African issues, irrespective of the sincerity of its intention. Since Nigeria has to respect the sovereign rights of these countries to act one way or the other on any issue, their refusal to co-operate on a given issue will make it difficult for Nigeria to attain the particular objective. For example, one of Nigeria's objectives in Africa, as noted above, is "the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of African states". But if the independence of any African country is undermined as in the case of French intervention in Gabon (1964), in Tchad (1970-79), in Western Sahara where France supports the Moroccans, in Central Africa to remove Emperor Bokassa, or through the stationing of French military personnel in so-called Francophone Africa,<sup>21</sup> Nigeria can prevent such neo-colonial activity only with the invitation or consent and co-operation of the African country directly involved. If there is no invitation or consent for Nigerian assistance, any attempt to defend the independence of the African country will amount to meddling in the internal affairs of an OAU member state, contrary to the provisions of the Charter. Thus, the fragmentation of Africa and continued neo-colonial activities there make the continent a difficult environment for Nigerian foreign policy.

Nevertheless, a difficult situation is a challenge to a determined mind. Hence, on one hand, the multiplicity of problems in Africa and their implications for freedom, equality and development combine to generate concern and motivation for

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21. Chaliand, Gerard; The Struggle for Africa - Conflict of the Great Powers. The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982, p. 54.

effective and purposeful foreign policy. On the other hand, the magnitude of these problems - the fight to eliminate colonialism, apartheid, racism and neo-colonialism, the funding of liberation movements, aid to poor African countries, the promotion of co-operation and mutual security of the countries in the continent - and their effect on available resources constitute obvious constraints on Nigeria's external policy. Generally, the fact that Africa is the cornerstone of Nigerian foreign policy, as noted above, explains the influence of African affairs on Nigeria's external policy considerations.

Apartheid and racism in Southern Africa are the most disturbing factors in the environment and constitute a source of instability on the continent as well as a threat to world peace and security.<sup>22</sup> According to the Director of African Affairs in the Ministry of External Affairs, these twin evils constitute an affront to both Africa and the international community. "Obviously", he said, "the deplorable situation in Southern Africa is not one which Africa can reasonably be expected to tolerate for much longer. Regardless of any internal divisions in Africa, many African states are determined collectively and separately to intensify at every level the struggle against racism and apartheid. Nigeria, as the largest country in Africa, believes quite rightly that it has special responsibilities in this matter, and it is determined to fulfil its obligations fully in the struggle

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22. Osobase, L.S.M. (Ambassador), "The Place of Africa in Nigeria's Foreign Policy", being a lecture at the 17th Induction Course for newly recruited Foreign Service Officers, Lagos, 6th June, 1979, p. 2.

against racism and apartheid".<sup>23</sup> Continuing, the Director stated, "In taking this stand, Nigeria believes that it is serving the cause of international peace and security, for, unless there is an irreversible transformation of the unacceptable situation in Southern Africa, and the speedy transfer of power to the majority of the people of those states, there will be no way of preventing an international conflict in Southern Africa. Nigeria's strong and determined opposition to racism and its support for the nationalist movements in Southern Africa is, therefore, in the interest of world peace".<sup>24</sup> These statements amply illustrate that the situation in Southern Africa has a crucial influence on the making of Nigeria's African policy.

Ambassador Osobase also outlined the point that "Nigeria has tried to foster Africa's higher interests through the contribution of ideas in meetings of the Organisation of African Unity at various levels, material assistance and diplomatic offensive in favour of the liberation movements fighting for freedom in Zimbabwe, Namibia and the Republic of South Africa, the creation of, and encouragement for, sub-regional economic organisations in the African continent. ... We have, through the OAU Liberation Committee contributed and continue to contribute material and financial assistance to nationalist liberation movements fighting for freedom and independence from colonialism and white minority racist governments wherever they exist in Africa".<sup>25</sup>

It was in the course of the crusade for the freedom of

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23. Ibid., p. 3.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., pp. 5-6.



the black man in South Africa that Nigeria organised a world conference in 1977 to focus attention on the criminal acts of the South African regime and its supporters. It was in the same connection that Nigeria floated the South Africa Relief Fund through which various kinds of assistance are made available towards the cause of freedom and justice for the black man in South Africa. Besides African freedom and independence, Nigeria's policy is directed towards the achievement of economic self-reliance for Africa. In August 1980 the Government of Nigeria hosted the first OAU Economic Summit devoted to finding ways of expanding inter-African economic co-operation. In addition to fostering African economic co-operation, Nigeria is committed to ensuring peace and stability in the continent by helping, through the OAU and at times unilaterally, to bring about peaceful settlement of inter-African disputes. All these concerns and commitments illustrate the influence of the continent on the foreign policy considerations of Nigeria.

#### THE GLOBAL SPHERE AND UNITED NATIONS

The Nigerian government from independence has had great admiration for the international system and has been attracted to it. Also Nigerian leaders have placed great importance on international organisations for a variety of reasons (see chapter 2(iii)) including the maintenance of global peace and security and the promotion of mutual aid.<sup>26</sup> Similarly international

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26. Nunn, Grady H; "Nigerian Foreign Relations" in Blitz, Franklin L, (ed.), The Politics and Administration of Nigerian Government, Sweet & Maxwell, London, 1965, p. 259.

organisations have literally maintained ideal purposes and principles, such as keeping international peace and security, upholding fundamental human rights, respect for the dignity and worth of the human person, non-interference in the internal affairs of states and acceptance of the sovereign equality of states etc. These high-sounding expressions make an irresistible appeal to both strong and weak states alike and are capable of attracting membership to international organisations. Thus, international organisations generally and especially the United Nations and its agencies, exert influence on the nation's foreign policy, as will be explained below.

#### THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION (UNO)

Nigeria was admitted into the United Nations on 7th October 1960 as the 99th member of the Organisation. The United Nations was founded on 26th June 1945, in San Francisco and came into existence on 24th October 1945, after the ratification of its Charter by the requisite majority of independent states. The Statute of the International Court of Justice is an integral part of the "Charter of the United Nations". To appreciate the appeal made to Nigeria by the United Nations, it is necessary to examine briefly the purposes and principles of the UN as set down in the Charter. The purposes are:

- (i) to maintain international peace and security;
- (ii) to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;
- (iii) to promote international co-operation in solving international economic, social and humanitarian problems and in encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction;

- (iv) to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends. <sup>27</sup>

The Charter further provided that in pursuit of these purposes the Organisation and its members shall act in accordance with the following principles:

- (1) the principle of sovereign equality of all member states;
- (2) fulfilment in good faith of the obligations arising from membership as well as enjoyment of the rights and benefits resulting from these;
- (3) settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice are not endangered;
- (4) refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state etc. <sup>28</sup>

As can be seen, these provisions are quite fascinating, hence the Nigerian government embraced the United Nations with enthusiasm and has consistently reaffirmed faith in the world body. It must be emphasized, however, that the United Nations is neither a supranational authority nor an entity with sovereign powers. In actual fact, the main organs of the United Nations and all their committees and subsidiary agencies are composed of member states represented by their delegates. Therefore any decision, resolution or action of the United Nations is the collective responsibility of the members. The organisation has no powers to enforce its resolutions. As such, compliance with the principles and purposes of the UN, depends to a great extent on the willingness of each member state to do so. This is a major factor that weakens the organisation and causes

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27. Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice, United Nations, New York; Article I.

28. Ibid., Article 2.



concern <sup>29</sup> to Nigeria and other nations which have high expectations for the UN.

In what specific ways has the UN been making impact on Nigerian foreign policy? Nigeria's acceptance of the principles and obligations of the UN entails some obligations which include abiding by the Charter, treaties and conventions of the United Nations. Such compliance creates limitations on the actions of member-states, for each will wish to avoid open condemnation on the floor of the United Nations for actions that are contrary to the principles and objectives of the Organisation. The nature of the United Nations, as a world body that offers the most popular and broad-based forum for multilateral diplomacy, encourages states to participate and to be skilful and effective in the numerous activities of the organisation. Just as it offers opportunity for diplomatic victory so it exposes the hypocrisy of some states. Either way, some lessons are learnt that guide states in their decisions and actions. Furthermore, the United Nations is a source of encouragement to weak states in their dealings with the militarily stronger states. It

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29. For example, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, Commissioner for External Affairs, said "Unfortunately, even a cursory review of the world situation will show that the rate of progress, in achieving the objectives set out in the organisation's own declarations, has been disappointing. You will permit me, Mr. President, to refer to the situation in the Southern parts of my own continent, Africa, to illustrate the continuing frustration of the ideals and goals to which we all are committed in this organisation, and which must be implemented in the interest of the United Nations and the whole of mankind". Statement at the 26th Session of UN General Assembly, New York, on Friday, 1st October, 1971.

provides a forum for the militarily weak state to challenge with considerable success the actions of the stronger states. The existence of such a forum is a booster to the foreign policy of states.

Nigeria's membership of the United Nations imposes other obligations and responsibilities. It is expected to participate in the deliberations of the organisation and for this purpose a Nigerian Permanent Mission to the UN has been established and maintained, one in New York and another in Geneva, from where Nigerian delegates attend the meetings of the United Nations. The discussions and resolutions of the committees are communicated to the Federal Government in form of reports. The reports are fed into the foreign policy machinery and are analysed, evaluated and used, sometimes as a reference point, in the consideration of further policy alternatives. To this extent, the United Nations generates inputs of ideas into foreign policy making. Nigeria is an activist member of the UN and participates in almost all committees of the UN. In addition to the main organs of the UN, there are many committees and sub-committees as well as subsidiary agencies, in which Nigeria has to be represented. This makes enormous demands on the human resources of the country. Usually experienced and capable diplomats are chosen to represent Nigeria at the UN. Nigerian soldiers have also been involved in United Nations peace-keeping operations. Nigeria's contingent to Congo and Lebanon were among the largest.

The UN makes financial demands on Nigeria. Its contribution to the United Nations' budget annually is greater

than that of many other African countries. Nigeria also contributes to the funds of the specialised agencies of the UN.

On the other hand, the Federal Government tries to benefit from its membership of the organisation, by using the various agencies of the organisation to advance the objectives of its foreign policy. On most issues at the UN since 1960, "Nigeria's position has been consistent with its general foreign policy: independence in judging cold war questions and vigorous opposition to colonialism and racial discrimination".<sup>30</sup> It is therefore clear that earnest consideration and preparations are made for Nigeria's participation in the meetings of the UN.

In pursuit of its foreign policy objectives at the UN, Nigeria's behaviour is restricted by the activities and interests of other members of the organisation, whose objectives on certain issues are at variance with those of Nigeria. For instance, as a member and chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, Nigeria tries to mobilise the world support for economic and military sanctions against South Africa so as to make the South African government abrogate its apartheid laws and policies. To make any such resolution effective, the support of all member states is necessary. But there are member countries of the UN that have significant political and economic interests in South Africa and therefore have been reluctant to vote with Nigeria for mandatory sanctions against

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30. Nunn, Grady H. op cit., pp. 259-60.



South Africa. This poses a major constraint on the foreign policy calculations of the Nigerian government.

#### OTHER FEATURES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Besides the encouragement and responsibilities arising from membership of the United Nations, the global environment contains ideological rivalry and military blocs which directly and indirectly affect Nigeria's position on some international questions. From the end of the Second World War in 1945, there emerged the cold war between the USA and USSR in their ambition to divide the world into two camps for (US/USSR) effective hegemony but under the guise of ideological purification. The cold war features have been aptly described by Ray Ofoegbu, thus:

"the major powers involved in this war established military blocs and bases; each imposed severe restrictions on trade between it, its allies and friends on one hand, and its Cold War adversaries on the other; each side practised brinkmanship and the USA adopted the policy of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons at times and places chosen by the USA irrespective of whether or not such places constituted part of any immediate provocation for the retaliation; each power group developed destructive capabilities in the form of atomic and hydrogen bombs; each side indulged extensively in spying on the other side; and there was ideological warfare between the capitalist liberal democracy of the West, and the Communist proletarian democracy of the East".<sup>31</sup>

By 1960 when Nigeria regained independence, the cold war was very much in existence with these features. Nigeria's foreign policy decision-makers were inescapably affected by the prevailing tensions, instability and crisis in the international system. In particular, they had the difficult

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31. Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World, op. cit., p. 117.

problem of establishing desirable objective relations with the West and East blocs. Another obvious effect of the cold war was Nigeria's adherence to non-alignment as a guiding principle in its relations with the blocs.

Another feature of the global environment was the privileged positions assumed by the old actors in the game of nations. The countries of Europe and north America were determined to take advantage of the newness of the emergent states of Africa including Nigeria. Thus according to Ofoegbu and Ogbuagu, the material consideration was not what Africa wanted but what the so-called developed countries wanted Africa to have, and the decision by 1960 was to keep Africa within the general economic, political, military and cultural sphere of especially the West.<sup>32</sup> As a result of the relative youth of Nigeria in the international system, there have been deliberate efforts by the older actors to underplay or to brush aside actions and demands of Nigeria, particularly where such are at variance with the wishes of the old actors. For example, in the early sixties, Nigeria endorsed UN activities in the Congo and consistently supported the Secretary General, but with severely limited understanding of the underlying ideological interests and the influence of a rival bloc on the Secretary General of the UN. Nigeria also was led to resist the Soviet "Troika" scheme for reorganising the UN Secretariat.<sup>33</sup> Again in the early

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32. Ibid., p. 118.

33. Nunn Grady H., op. cit., p. 259.

sixties, Nigeria called for allocation to Africa of a permanent seat in the Security Council of the UN,<sup>34</sup> but the idea was brushed under the carpet. In the early seventies, Nigeria was led into signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which was to give a few older actors the total monopoly of nuclear power. There are many examples of such deliberate acts of deception by the older actors, which have helped to undermine the efforts of Nigeria.

The international economic condition since 1960 has its own influence on Nigerian foreign policy. This has been discussed in chapter 9 (see factors that affect the practice of foreign policy). Generally, all Africa was perceived as a vast area of raw materials and markets for the processed products of the industrialised countries. With world-wide economic depression, rising standards of living, increasing demand for scarce resources, high inflation and "the insatiable appetite of European economies",<sup>35</sup> there began the unprecedented exploitation of the newly independent poor nations by the older rich states in the system. Various financial institutions and multinational corporations emerged as effective actors purposely, as we have noted, to exploit and undermine the activities of the new nations. These are some of the features of the international system in which Nigeria makes its foreign policy.

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34. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., p. 60.

35. Oyebode, Akindale B., "Towards a new policy on decolonization", in Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World, op. cit., p. 97.



## INFLUENCE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Another source of influence on Nigerian foreign policy is its bilateral relations with other countries. As already noted, one of the declared purposes of Nigeria in external affairs is "to remain on friendly terms with all nations".<sup>36</sup> This implies acceptance of obligations arising from friendly relations and avoidance of acts which are capable of endangering such relationships. To Nigeria, every friendly relationship is important and deserves to be strengthened through diplomatic intercourse and mutual co-operation in economic, scientific, technical and cultural activities etc. To do this, demands enormous sacrifices of resources and time of the state, which in turn influences the general consideration of how to allocate available resources to meet the demands of each relationship.

Nigeria's desire to remain on friendly terms with every country has the obvious implication of giving Nigeria's foreign policy a gradualist or moderate character, for every foreign policy decision is carefully examined to weigh the effects on the friendly countries involved. A sincere consideration of the effect of a given action on a friendly country can cause such action to be deferred or even abandoned altogether. To illustrate the influence of bilateral relations on foreign policy, Aluko noted that Nigeria has been unable to take a stand over the conflict in the Middle East because of her relations with Egypt and Arab countries.<sup>37</sup> Other examples

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36. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., pp. 51-59.

37. Aluko O., Essays on Nigerian Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 267.

are relations with USA, USSR and Britain. That such bilateral relations have influence on Nigerian foreign policy is evident in the 1984 annual foreign policy speech of Nigeria's Head of State, Major General Buhari. He said, *inter alia*,

"Our bilateral relations with certain countries outside the African continent have been of great concern to us. Britain, which has for so long been regarded by Nigerians as a traditional friend, has caused us once again in recent times to doubt the genuineness of this friendship just as we did in the 1960s when our young nation faced the greatest threat to its national unity and in the period immediately following the senseless assassination of General Murtala Mohammed in the abortive bid to replace the federal military government in February 1976.

... The Government and people of Nigeria are prepared without prejudice to our national interest to work in genuine friendship with Britain, which is Nigeria's largest trading partner in Europe and shares with us the bonds of membership of the Commonwealth".<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, Nigeria's relations with the USSR and USA exert substantial influence on the external posture of Nigeria. These are influences arising from expectation of support on international political questions and co-operation in economic, scientific and technical spheres in which Nigeria has interests. Being super-Powers, their support for Nigeria on say Southern Africa, will hasten the realisation of Nigeria's objective in Southern Africa - the abrogation of racism and apartheid in that part of Africa and the emergence of a government of the majority black people of the region. On the other hand, their refusal of support for Nigeria will delay the realisation of the objectives. In making some foreign policy decisions, therefore, consideration is given to the likely reaction of

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38. Buhari, Muhammed (Major General), Annual Foreign Policy Speech, 1984, *op. cit.*

Nigeria's other friends and how best to obtain their agreement. Such concern and consideration are not limited to relations with the big powers. Even with smaller countries in Africa, there are also considerations of their likely reaction to given situations. It will be foolhardy to take any sovereign state for granted in international politics. For example, on any issue before African states which requires voting, the vote of Botswana or Lesotho or Cape Verde is as important as that of Libya or Egypt or Zaire. Since the objectives of Nigeria's African policy can only be attained with the co-operation and collaboration of other African countries, then the level of bilateral relations with these countries becomes a significant factor in making policy decisions.



**PART IV      FOREIGN POLICY MAKING : ILLUSTRATION AND EXPLANATION**

(b) the departments of government; (c) the pluralists comprising various influential groups and parties inside and outside the government; and (d) the agencies of public control such as elections and the mass media. His work offers a useful insight into the search for the machinery of making foreign policy in a given country. Although Barber included both the Pluralists and the Agencies of public control<sup>2</sup> in policy-making, he was aware I think, of the distinction between "those who influence policy" and "those who make the precise decisions". He may therefore uphold the view here that formal responsibility for policy making lies with the executive arm of the government. Similarly, Lloyd Jensen<sup>3</sup> noted that the Executive branch of the government (and within it, the top decision-makers - the president, prime minister or chancellor) has the primary role in the making of foreign policy, while others like the bureaucracy, the military, political parties and interest groups are also involved. Again, there appears to be no clear distinction between the machinery directly involved in making foreign policy and the environmental factors that merely influence the machinery. Another writer David Vital distinguished between "The Machinery" - the group of individuals within the state who have the effective authority and responsibility for foreign policy-making; and those groups and

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2. Ibid., pp. 66, 89-91, 101.

3. Jensen, Lloyd; Explaining Foreign Policy. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982, pp. 116-150.

personalities who may be neither part of the Executive nor of the government but which form part of the environment of the foreign policy makers and therefore influence the process.<sup>4</sup> To him, the making of foreign policy is the business of the Executive and for all practical purposes the Executive is unfettered in its exercise of this function.<sup>5</sup> To a large extent, this view is true of Nigeria. In actual fact, foreign policy generally, is made within and by the executive machinery of government. The machinery consists, as noted above, of persons in institutional positions formally or constitutionally responsible for foreign policy and these include: the cabinet, the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service<sup>6</sup> - that are actually in charge of the formulation of major policy.

In the pluralist perspective, foreign policy making involves diverse and conflicting interests and views of the politically active parties and groups inside and outside government. It is not restricted to a particular section of the government. It argues that it will amount to a deliberate refusal to appreciate the vast range of participants and issues which are involved, and the variety of levels at which these issues are handled, if one thinks that "making foreign policy is the business of the Executive". According to Barber the pluralist assumes that

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4. Vital, David; The Making of British Foreign Policy. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1968, p. 49.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 89.



"There exist in society competing centres with different bases of power and influence. ... Policy does not emerge as a single stream from a central source. It is built up incrementally by a series of decisions, recommendations, pressures, and debates in a continuous dialogue between government, parties and groups".<sup>7</sup>

This view has its merit. It is obvious that some important elements outside the executive arm of the government, like pressure groups, political parties, and agencies of public control, are involved in making foreign policy. The scope of such involvement may not be easily quantified. It is believed that some times and on some issues, the role of this group outside the Executive arm of the government, may be decisive. A close observation of the role of Congress in U.S. foreign policy, or of Parliament in the development of Nigerian foreign policy (1954-65), will likely justify the inclusion of the Legislature within the machinery of policy making. The same may be true of the military and some economic institutions/corporations, which are increasingly involved in the making of foreign policy because of the growing concern in many countries with national security and economic progress. By the same argument, some scientists form part of the machinery. A moment's reflection on the role of the nuclear scientist in the laboratory, in the shaping of the foreign policies of states involved in the armament race, will reveal how decisive can be the role in policy making of some groups outside the structure of government.

Contrary to the pluralist view, Max Beloff argued thus -

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7. Barber, James; op. cit., p. 65.

"Foreign policy cannot emanate from the electorate. In this field more than in any other the citizen is in the last resort dependent upon Government, if it blunders either in the selection of goals or in their execution, there is little he can do to put things right - even if he has to pay with his life for their blunders".<sup>8</sup>

Also both Joseph Frankel<sup>9</sup> and Patrick Keatinge respectively held that foreign policy is clearly made by government and so the latter identified the machinery to be - the Cabinet and its leadership, the Department of External Affairs and its Minister, and the Diplomatic Service.<sup>10</sup>

In Nigeria, similar departments/agencies of government are directly involved in making foreign policy. To say that they alone make foreign policy can readily be challenged. As a result of changes in political circumstances like frequent military intervention, coupled with the widening scope and complexity of the country's external affairs, there have developed increasing involvement in foreign policy making of various departments, parastatals, non-governmental organisations and also the military, which traditionally was an instrument to further the aims of foreign policy, especially during wars and international crises. To illustrate the point, we recall earlier reference (chapter 3) to the role in foreign policy of the Department of Immigration (on the expulsion of illegal aliens from ECOWAS states), the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Information, Transport and Aviation, the Nigerian Chamber of

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8. Beloff, Max; The Future of British Foreign Policy. Secker & Warburg, London, 1969, p. 144.

9. Frankel, Joseph; "The Making of Foreign Policy", op. cit., p. 20. Dismissing the pluralist view, he said, even in well established democracies, the idea of open politics does not fully govern foreign policy.

10. Keatinge, Patrick; "The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy", Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1973, p. 41.

Commerce, the Nigerian Medical Association, the Bar Association and Football/Athletics Associations etc. The widening scope of foreign policy is due largely to the increasing competition for scarce resources of the world, the growth of interdependence of nations, and the spread of internationalism. These necessitate the involvement of more departments and agencies of government and national organisations/associations in the formulation and execution of foreign policy, at different times and various levels.

While accepting that various organs of government and groups in the country are involved directly or indirectly in foreign policy, in our view, it is essential to distinguish between the policy-maker and those who influence policy. For while the former is consistently performing and ready to perform, as duty, the function of making foreign policy, the latter's influence varies as much with issues as with the responsiveness of policy-maker or the prevailing international situation. Second, the policy-maker has a responsibility for policy-output and perhaps effects. He is also accountable to the public for such policies. On the other hand, the influencer of policy has no responsibility for policy output and effect and is not accountable to the public. The involvement of the institutions and groups in this category are indirect and incidental to their main functions. There are obviously some organs and departments/agencies of government that have statutory responsibility for making foreign policy and have it as their main function. These constitute the machinery that have to be identified for examination in order to understand the process of making foreign policy.



To identify the machinery of foreign policy making in Nigeria, one has to take into consideration, the various changes in government (already discussed in part one) followed by changes in governmental structure and nomenclature. Some of the changes have not meant changes in function as will be indicated below under each structure. More often such changes reflect mere replacement of some personnel by another. We will try to highlight some of these governmental structures to the extent that they were different from the other and involved directly in foreign policy making. Thus, in Nigeria the machinery of foreign policy includes:

- (1) The Presidency (Head of State/Government and his/her assistants and advisers)
- (2) The Supreme Military Council
- (3) The Federal Executive Council
- (4) The National Council of States
- (5) The Bureaucracy - the Ministry of External Affairs and the Diplomatic Missions
- (6) The Bureaucracy - the other government Ministries/Departments
- (7) The Military

#### THE PRESIDENCY

In the first Republic, Nigeria had a parliamentary form of government with a President (Head of State) and a Prime Minister (Head of Government). Under the military rule (1966-69), the posts of President and Prime Minister were abolished and in their place emerged the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The incumbent combined the functions of

the President and Prime Minister. In performing these functions, the military Head of State was not under any constitutional obligation to act "in accordance with the advice of any other authority or institution." He nevertheless acted in consultation with the Supreme Military Council and the National Council of States, on various affairs of the State. In the second Republic, which had a Presidential form, the Constitution (1979) vested on the President the executive powers of the Federation (sections (1) (a)). After it came another military rule (1984 to date) with the Head of State performing the functions of the President. The term "President" therefore is used here to represent incumbent of the highest office of the Federation whether under constitutional or military rule. "The President" and "The Head of State" will be used interchangeably, bearing in mind that our concern here is about the role of the incumbent of that position in making Nigeria's foreign policy.

In a general sense, the Presidency determines the country's foreign policy and has ultimate responsibility for such policy. If the foreign policy is judged successful the credit goes to the President and if a failure, the blame goes to the President also. The President is the Chief Executive of the State. He is aided and assisted by Ministers, advisers and a host of assistants, in managing the affairs of the state. All as a team constitute the Presidency. To be specific, in Nigeria, the Presidency is made up of the Head of State/Government, the Vice-President or its military equivalent called the Chief of Staff of Supreme Headquarters and all staff of the State House and the Cabinet Office ranging from the Secretary to

Federal Government to the most junior staff therein.

Statutorily the President has a clearly defined role in making national (including foreign) policy for the country. According to the Constitution (1963),<sup>11</sup> chapter iv section 34, the President shall be "the Head of State of the Federation and Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation". This provision puts him above every other person in the country in determining national policy. He was also vested with the executive authority of the Federation (section 84 -(1)), including the power to appoint the Prime Minister and other Ministers of the Government of the Federation (section 87 - (1) and (4) ). It further stated, "The President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, may assign to the Prime Minister or any other Minister of the Government of the Federation responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation, including the administration of any department of government (section 91). This means that the President has power to appoint the Minister of External Affairs and the Ambassadors. As the Commander-in-chief, he also has some authority to commit Nigeria's Armed Forces to military action abroad. These are clear enough authority vested on the President for the control and direction of national policies and foreign policy in particular. The constitution gives no greater authority to any other important and influential institution in Nigeria that is involved in the making of foreign policy. Neither the Prime Minister nor the

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11. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1963.



Ministry of External Affairs has its role in foreign policy so much defined in the constitution. If by any arrangement - act of omission or commission - any other authority or institution performed a major foreign policy function, that would be deemed for and on behalf of the President of the Federation.

It can be argued that the President had no real powers since in all these functions he had to act in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister. Hence many critics blame the Balewa government for lapses in foreign policy. Although here we combine the functions of the President and Prime Minister in foreign policy, it can be said in fairness to that government that the President had its share of the blame to the extent of its constitutional powers. Section 93:3 of the constitution made it clear that "by this constitution the President is required to act in accordance with the advice of any person or authority, the question whether he has in any case received or acted in accordance with such advice shall not be enquired into in any court of law".<sup>12</sup> By this provision, the President was granted unquestionable right to make authoritative and binding decisions. It allowed him freedom to act independently of the advice of the Prime Minister or other authority in the country on any matter in respect of the Federation. By same token, it allowed him the power to determine national policies. To buttress the power of the President and ensure that his decisions were implemented, the constitution further provided

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12. Ibid. Section 93:3.

in section 94 that "The Prime Minister shall keep the President fully informed concerning the general conduct of the government of the Federation and shall furnish the President with such information as he may request with respect to any particular matter relating to the government of the Federation".<sup>13</sup> From these provisions, one can clearly infer that the President had the ultimate authority and responsibility for making overall national policy and foreign policy in particular. Whether or not the authority was utilized and to what extent is a matter of judgement. We can assume here that the President and Prime Minister jointly performed their foreign policy role.

Generally, the President controls and co-ordinates foreign policy, performs representational functions, makes major foreign policy speeches (declaratory functions), with the concurrence of parliament or military council, has power to sign treaties between Nigeria and any other countries, and acts as a balancer of rival interests in policy making, etc. These functions can be explained briefly.

The President controls the making of foreign policy in two ways. The first is through the appointment of the Minister of External Affairs, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry and the principal representatives of Nigeria abroad. These officials hold their positions at the pleasure of the President and are therefore responsible to him. They submit to the President for consideration and approval all major foreign policy proposals.

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13. Ibid. Section 94.

The President reserves the power to agree or disagree with any such proposal. It is only when such policy proposal receives the President's approval that it becomes policy. Second, the President controls foreign policy-making through fiscal measures. By releasing or withholding funds for certain involvements, the President determines whether or not a particular policy is worth being maintained. Although the National Assembly/Military Council approves the budget, the decision to release given amount of funds to specific projects or events, is usually made by the Executive.

Co-ordination of the making of foreign policy is another function of the President. This function is performed through committees, which the President or Vice-President is the chairman. The Committees consist of representatives of the relevant Ministries or departments and some experts on the particular issue in question. They meet from time to time to examine and advise on major events in the external environment. Under military governments, committee meetings have been frequent, for in the absence of advisers, political parties and National Assembly members to consult on various issues, the government resorts to frequent consultation, often in committees,<sup>14</sup> with experienced senior staff of the bureaucracy. In the Committee, the President/Head of State is briefed about the major activities of the Ministries/departments while the President's directives are passed on through representatives of the Ministries/departments to the appropriate officials for implementation.

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14. To illustrate the regularity of committee meetings, if one visits the office of a Minister or Permanent Secretary, maybe for an appointment, it is common to be told: "He has gone to the State House for a meeting".



The Head of State performs diplomatic and symbolic functions in foreign policy. Nigeria's ever expanding external relations have had the effect of involving the President more personally in international diplomacy and representational functions. He attends summit meetings of heads of State and government during which he talks and bargains with other heads of State/government about elimination of apartheid and racism, trade, oil prices, transfer of technology, regional conflicts and world peace. Sometimes, some summit meetings and state visits are purely ceremonial. Usually the decision to attend or not rests with the President. With increasing involvement in African affairs and the changing economic fortunes of the country, the Head of State has had to initiate some summit meetings to discuss with his counterparts in person, prevailing problems and how to resolve them, in which case he must personally attend the summit.<sup>15</sup>

In making foreign policy, the President plays the role of a balancer between competing interests in the domestic environment on one hand and between the domestic and external forces on the other. In the event of divergent ideas on a given issue being put forward by different policy makers at the top-level, the President acts as the power-broker. His choice of a given policy is usually respected in the country. At the international level, the task of balancing forces between the domestic and external environment is perhaps more intricate. He is bound

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15. Examples include the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Lagos in January 1966, the UN Special conference for action against apartheid held in Lagos, August 1977, the OAU special economic summit, Lagos, April 1980 and the meetings in Lagos by the Heads of State of ECOWAS member states.

to resist emotional pressures, accommodate criticisms, weigh possible options in relation to their implications and decide on policies which he considers more beneficial and less costly to the nation. Whenever there is a conflict with another country, there are outbursts of emotions from some Nigerian citizens urging the President to take drastic action of one form or the other. The ability of the President to temper emotions with objective facts and to manage such situations at minimum cost to the country and to existing relationships is indicative of his responsibility for foreign policy choices at the top-level.

#### THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL

Since the advent of military rule in Nigeria in January 1966, the Supreme Military Council (SMC) has been one of the major governmental structures. It has been the highest legislative organ of the military governments. the SMC exists only under military rule and each successive government has retained this organ as the highest ruling military council. Until August 27, 1985, the name remained "the Supreme Military Council". Following the changes of government at the end of August 1985, the name of the council was changed to the Armed Forces Ruling Council - AFRC (similar to the ruling military Council in Ghana).

After each successful coup, the Supreme Military Council is reconstituted and usually comprised of the Head of State (President) as chairman, the Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, Service Chiefs, the Inspector General of Police and military

governors of States.<sup>16</sup> Others in the Supreme Council include divisional military commanders and representatives of senior officers in the army, navy and air force. In theory the SMC is the supreme policy making body of the military governments but in practice, the Federal Executive Council (to be discussed below) has been the real decision-making body. Essentially, the Supreme Military Council has the function of "providing the general policy guidelines within which the affairs of the nation must be conducted".<sup>17</sup> It has responsibility for all matters of national security and defence, including the power to declare a state of emergency or war. The SMC also has the power to set up and appoint members of the other two decision-making organs called the Federal Executive Council and National Council of States.

The policy-making function of the SMC must be limited as the decree establishing it provided for it to meet at least four times a year. Although it could meet more often this is hardly enough time to deal with many policy issues of the government. There is also a clear distance between the SMC and the specialist ministries/departments of government that examine most policy matters. As a result, the SMC unlike the FEC, may not be quite familiar with all the relevant aspects of certain policy matters. Thus, with a few exceptions like the decisions to recognise the MPLA Government and to send Nigerian peace-keeping force to Chad (see chapter 8), the Supreme Military Council's function in policy making has been occasional, perhaps involving mere ratification

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16. After July 1975, following a change of government, military governors and civilian commissioners were excluded from the Supreme Military Council.

17. Muhammed Murtala; A Time for Action, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1980, p. 11.



of broad policy guidelines on major issues. On many other issues, the SMC is kept informed of the decisions by the responsible organs of government. According to an official of the Cabinet Office, the SMC provides the general direction of the military government, it does initiate policies and give directives to other organs of government but in terms of the magnitude of functions of a modern government, the SMC is perhaps the one organ of government with the highest power and least functions.<sup>18</sup>

### THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

As earlier noted, foreign policy making is essentially an activity of the executive arm of government. In Nigeria, the executive body responsible for the conduct and direction of the affairs of the Federal Government is the Federal Executive Council.<sup>19</sup> It is the equivalent of the Cabinet in the British system of government. In the first Republic of Nigeria, it was known as the "Council of Ministers for the Federation" established by article 89 of the Constitution (1963) and assigned the function "to advise the President in the government of the Federation". Under the military governments, the Federal Executive Council remained as the central executive organ of government, being reconstituted by each successive government. The only difference being in composition with some soldiers replacing civilians. While inaugurating the Council on August 13, 1975, the Head of State clearly spelt out the structure and function of the Council. He said:

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18. Interview.

19. Under military rule, two other bodies are noteworthy, namely, the Supreme Military Council and the National Council of States. The function of each complemented the others, but the Federal Executive Council was centrally and ideally charged with formulating policies and executing decisions of government.

\* After a military coup on 27th August 1985 the name changed to the National Council of Ministers.

"This Council as reconstituted is deliberately made up of both military personnel and a large number of civilians ... As one of the three main organs of the Federal Military Government, the Federal Executive Council will formulate policies and execute decisions within the framework of the guidelines which the Supreme Military Council and the National Council of States will lay down from time to time. The deliberations of this council will lead to the best decisions in the interest of the nation as a whole. We all have collective responsibility for the decisions we reach". 20

Thus contrary to the name, the Council has both policy and executive functions in government.

The Constitution (1979) also defined the functions of this Council as a central policy-making body without specifying its name. Section 136 -(2) provided thus:

"The President shall hold regular meetings with the Vice-President and all the Ministers of the Government of the Federation for the purposes of -

- (a) determining the general direction of domestic and foreign policies of the Government of the Federation;
- (b) co-ordinating the activities of the President, the Vice-President and the Ministers of the Government of the Federation in the discharge of their executive responsibilities; and
- (c) advising the President generally in the discharge of his executive functions...". 21

It can be observed that every successive government of Nigeria has recognised the importance of the Federal Executive Council as a central policy-making body.

The Council usually consists of Ministers/Commissioners of the government of the Federation who are responsible for various businesses of the government, including the administration of the Ministries. Between 1967 and 1975, some Permanent Secretaries

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20. Muhammed Murtala (General), A Time for Action, op. cit., pp. 13 and 15.

21. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979, Section 136 -(2): a-c.



were co-opted to participate in the deliberations of the Council and to advise the Council on certain issues emanating from their departments. Later this was considered to be open involvement of the civil servants in politics, with dangerous implications for the civil service in general. Permanent Secretaries were then barred from Council meetings except in advisory capacity at the request of their Commissioners/Ministers. The Head of State is usually the Chairman of the Council. Most matters of national importance came before the Council for deliberation and decision. Such matters can be initiated by any member of the Council or by the Ministry/department of government that is immediately concerned with the issue. Decisions reached in the Council are considered to have the widest possible support. Matters for the Council are usually put in the form of a memorandum and the presenter makes sure that such matters are included in the 'Council Agenda' for a particular meeting.

The Federal Executive Council is trusted with perhaps more policy-making functions than any other organ of government. This is because (1) the Council is a large body comprising of the political heads of all Ministries of government; (2) it covers a wide range of government activities; and considering experiences/expertise of its members in politics and administration, the Council is a useful forum for exchange of ideas about the complex issues of modern governments; (3) its meetings are in private and its decisions are either classified or labelled "top secret"; (4) decisions of the Council are considered binding that neither the Head of State nor any Minister/Commissioner will



ignore or attempt to circumvent without cause shown. The overwhelming role of the Executive Council in policy making is illustrated in the frequent reference by senior officials of government to "the decision of the Council" or "directives of the President-in-Council", as the source of authority for given actions. Most Heads of State of Nigeria also have relied to a great extent on decisions reached in Council. As in any other country, no leader is said to be an expert in all aspects of modern government, especially on issues like inflation, unemployment, oil market prices, nuclear technology, aviation, maritime laws etc. Consequently frequent recourse to Council meeting becomes necessary in order to pull together the expertise of members to form the basis of government action. The Head of State/President relies on the collective wisdom of the Federal Executive Council on many state matters. Each Minister/Commissioner relies on the support of his colleagues in Council to put through his Ministry's proposals. The Federal Executive Council has the unique role of receiving proposals from all government ministries/departments, determining their acceptance or otherwise, and co-ordinating activities of all government units. The Ministries/departments are guided by the conclusions (directives) of the Federal Executive Council. These are few indications that the Council has a central role in policy-making.

#### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATES

Prior to July 1975, there were two military governmental structures in Nigeria - the Supreme Military Council and the

Federal Executive Council. Following the military coup of that year, the new Head of the Federal Military Government, Brigadier (later General) Murtala Muhammed announced on July 30, 1975 the introduction of a third structure of the government, namely "The National Council of States". The NCS consisted of the Head of State as chairman, the chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, Service Chiefs, the Inspector General of Police and the military Governors of the States. Subsequent military governments have retained this organ.

According to Muhammed this Council was set up "to provide a forum for state representation in the discussion of matters affecting their interests".<sup>22</sup> The underlying motive included a determination to reduce the influence and involvement of state governors on national issues. Under Gowon, the military governors were also members of the Supreme Military Council. They soon became very influential and arrogated to themselves much power to the effect that "the states were being run as private estates".<sup>23</sup> Consequently, there were vociferous demands for their removal but due to their influence and presence in the Supreme Military Council, Gowon could not effect their removal. The subsequent military administration decided to give the SMC control over the state governors by excluding them from the Supreme Council and also by creating a subordinate structure for states' representation. The decree establishing the councils made it clear that "the National Council of States is subject to the overall control of the Supreme Military Council...",<sup>24</sup> and

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22. Muhammed Murtala, op. cit., p. 11.

23. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

24. Basic Provisions Decree 1975 in Official Gazette (Supplement) no. 52, vol. 62, Lagos, 23rd October 1975, p. A149.

excluded from participating in making national policies. In effect, the policy-making function of the National Council of States has been limited to matters affecting the states.

## THE BUREAUCRACY - THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

### THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

It is perhaps obvious that the Ministry of External Affairs is an arm of the bureaucracy which has primary responsibility for matters of foreign policy. The political head of the Ministry is the Minister of External Affairs<sup>25</sup> and the administrative head is the Permanent Secretary, who is also the Accounting Officer of the Ministry and responsible for the direction, supervision and co-ordination of the work of departments and units in the Ministry. In an attempt to cope with increases in size, function and new demands, the Ministry has undergone some reorganisations<sup>26</sup> over the years. Reorganisation is likely to be a continuing exercise in a dynamic foreign service like that of Nigeria with tremendous opportunities for improvement in its structure and organisation. Every re-organisation results in some adjustment to the structure and organisation of the Ministry. The re-organisations almost correspond in frequency with changes in government and subsequent changes in the political leadership of the Ministry. The obvious implication is the difficulty of analysing critically the organisational structure. It is also difficult because most of the documentary materials are

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25. Sometimes designated "Commissioner for External Affairs".

26. These include: reorganisations of 1966 directed by Ironsi; 1972 under J.T.F. Iyalla; 1976 following Adedeji Foreign Policy Review Report; 1981 which abolished the post of Permanent Secretary and created Directorates; 1983/84 which restored Permanent Secretary post and established more Departments.



classified and not accessible.

According to Professor Aluko, the Ministry of External Affairs is organised partly on a geographical, and partly on a functional basis.<sup>27</sup> He identified ten divisions which after the reorganisation of 1972 became ten departments and six special units as follows: Administration, Africa, America, Asia and Pacific, Protocol, Consular and Legal, Economic, European, Information and Cultural, International Organisation, and Research Departments.<sup>28</sup> The six special units were: Policy planning and co-ordination, Pilgrimage Commission, Overseas Communication Service, Passport and Travel Control, Inspectorate Service, and Internal Liaison Unit.<sup>29</sup> The Ministry has since been restructured. Under the new arrangement, there are seven Directorates: (i) Service Matters (Administration and Establishment matters); (ii) Policy Planning and Staff Development; (iii) African Affairs; (iv) Regions; (v) International Organisations; (vi) International Economic Co-operation; (vii) Consular Affairs. Within each directorate are some departments. For example, the Directorate of Regions has three departments - America, Asia and Pacific, and European.

Each Directorate is headed by a Director-General who reports directly to the Minister of External Affairs. The Permanent Secretary<sup>30</sup> regarded as premus inter pares is basically the head of the Directorate of Service Matters and responsible

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27. Olajide Aluko; Essays on Nigerian Foreign Policy. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1981, p. 154.

28. Ibid., p. 170.

29. Ibid.

30. A post abolished in 1981, under the leadership of Professor Ishaya Audu, and restored in October 1983.

for general administration and accounts of the Ministry.

Below the Director-Generals are the various heads of departments and their deputy heads, assisted by policy staff, generally known as "Branch A Officers" or External Affairs Officers. Another category of staff, usually more numerous, are the executive cadre, designated as "Branch B".<sup>31</sup>

All categories of staff work in co-operation for the performance of the functions of the Ministry. If the names of the directorates are anything to go by, they indicate the major spheres of activity performed by the Ministry, some of which are policy-making.

Names/designations can sometimes mislead but following the frankness that characterise African governments' approach to international relations, names often, as in this case, reflect true intentions or functions. The spontaneous nature of certain events in the world demand initiative, quick decisions and action.

In which case, the Ministry or its outpost i.e. the Diplomatic Missions abroad can, relying on experience and precedence, make policy decisions and inform the President accordingly. Most foreign policy papers (proposals) are initiated and drafted by the Ministry. When proposals that have implications for foreign policy emanate from other branches or departments of government, the Permanent Secretary or Director of the appropriate Directorate in the Ministry of External Affairs is usually invited for advice. Many Ambassadors/High Commissioners and other principal representatives abroad are given direct access to the Head of State and

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31. Prior to 1981 reorganisation, there were four categories of staff in the Ministry of External Affairs, designated Branch A - consisting of External Affairs Officers; Branch B - Executive Cadre; Branch C - Secretaries and Typists; and Branch D - Drivers, Messengers, Chancery guards. See Aluko op. cit., p. 154. After 1981 branches B, C, D were merged to B and so there are only two categories now.



are sometimes invited for consultation on major foreign policy issues. In many cases the positions adopted by the foreign Ministry have not been ignored, with some exceptions.

For example, in the early sixties the Ministry of External Affairs persistently argued that the Anglo-Nigerian defense pact was a sharp contradiction of the decision to be non-aligned on cold-war matters. In line with the views of many nationalists, political parties, trade/student Unions and media, this view prevailed and the pact was abrogated. One notable exception is the Ministry's opposition to the Non-Proliferation Treaty,<sup>32</sup> which the government ignored to sign the Treaty in 1971. On the other hand, the Ministry's submission for non-retaliatory action against Fernando Poo in 1974 (case already cited) led to the conciliatory stance of the federal Government over the crisis. Ranging from regional matters like the policy about ECOWAS, to Nigeria/Cameroun border dispute, sending of peace-keeping troops to Chad, the sale of oil at concessionary prices to African states, issues in bilateral relations, expulsion of Libyan Peoples Bureau, and the recognition of the Sarahawi Arab Democratic Republic (Polisario Front), etc. the Ministry's views have prevailed. Not all the decisions have been seen as laudable. For example the expulsion of the Libyan Peoples Bureau, which caused internal opposition in the Ministry between the radicals in support of Libya's revolutionary ideas and the conservatives opposed to radical changes, has been

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32. Interview with officials from the Ministry confirmed this, and it was reflected in the speech by Nigerian delegation to the general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency held in New Delhi, 4-11 December 1979. See 'Report of the Conference'.



criticised outside government circles. The Ministry's position - (that which the political head favoured and submitted to the President-in-Council for approval) - was in favour of sending the bureau out of Nigeria and this prevailed. In the recent expulsions from Nigeria of illegal aliens, who had not complied with the provisions of ECOWAS treaty on the free movement of people, the role of the Ministry of External Affairs in making the decision is not yet fully known. But its submission, urging for caution and avoidance of maltreatment of ECOWAS citizens, was accepted and implemented.<sup>33</sup> The basic point being made here is that the Ministry of External Affairs is a major part of the machinery of making foreign policy in Nigeria.

#### NIGERIA'S DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

The Diplomatic Missions play a very important role in the making of foreign policy. Some of the scholars referred to earlier, such as Keatinge, identify the diplomatic mission as a distinct part of the machinery. In the Nigerian case the mission is just an outpost of the Ministry of External Affairs. Although in some diplomatic missions, staff of other Ministries than External Affairs work together with foreign service officers, usually under the supervision and control of the Ambassador or Principal Representative, the diplomatic missions are an integral part of the parent Ministry of External Affairs, whose functions as considered above include those of external missions. It is recognised that each Mission has discretionary powers to take

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33. The Federal Government provided transport and security guard to protect the persons and properties of the aliens on departure.

important decisions on behalf of the Federal Government in many issues but such powers are determined and controlled by the Ministry of External Affairs to which every diplomatic Mission looks for guidance on every major issue. While recognizing the importance of the Missions in supplying valuable information through Despatches, Reports, telegrams and Briefs for broad policy consideration, it seems to me that diplomatic missions, if viewed distinctly, are more involved in the conduct of foreign policy than in its making. But as an arm of the Ministry, the Missions are equally involved in the Ministry's policy-making functions.

#### THE BUREAUCRACY - THE OTHER MINISTRIES/ DEPARTMENTS

The bureaucracy in Nigeria is involved in the making and implementation of foreign policy. It is made up of several government ministries and departments. Each Ministry is headed by a Minister/Commissioner with a Permanent Secretary in charge of general administration. The bureaucracy is the largest organ of the government, covering virtually every field of government activity. Its large size and scope of activity make it appear to be the natural centre for policy activity, while in reality it is one of the executive organs. The bureaucracy is organised in a hierarchical structure, reflecting the shape of a pyramid. At the base, are the junior civil servants who perform minor but essential services. At the middle of the pyramid are the intermediate staff who initiate most policy proposals in their respective spheres of activity. At the apex of the structure are the Permanent Secretaries and Ministers, who make certain policy decisions

within their authority and act as the link between the Ministry and the Federal Executive Council and other policy-making bodies.

We consider the bureaucracy as a whole to be an important part of the machinery of making policy because in the conduct of government business the activities of the Ministries and Departments do overlap. A good many foreign policy issues are handled by other Ministries than External Affairs Ministry. The Federal Government's recognition of both the overlapping of many foreign policy issues and the need to harness the expertise of other federal ministries, resulted in assigning to some home ministries joint responsibility (with External Affairs Ministry) for some foreign affairs matters as follows:

1. Ministry of Finance - External borrowing; external financial aid; relations with international financial institutions; reconciliation of federal applications for external technical assistance.
2. Ministry of Defence - Liaison with armed forces of other countries; clearance of foreign military aircraft and warships; visits of foreign service chiefs; and visits of defence and war colleagues.
3. Ministry of Economic Development (now called National Planning) - Co-ordination and presentation of Federal and State applications for external technical assistance; relations with UN Economic Commission for Africa; Economic and Social Committee of OAU, Commonwealth Economic Committee, and the ECOWAS.
4. Ministry of Information - Materials for external publicity and the projection of Nigeria's image abroad, e.g. production of films, documentary and statistical materials about Nigeria; publication of factual information about investment and market opportunities in Nigeria.
5. Ministry of Trade - External trade; trade fairs and exhibitions.
6. Ministry of Industry - Foreign investment in Nigeria; import substitution through industries; and industrial co-ordination and co-operation with other African countries.



7. Ministry of Education - Co-ordination of external aid for education; overseas study; and relations with UNESCO.<sup>34</sup>

In particular, the Ministry of Petroleum perhaps has been more involved than any other Ministry in the activities of OPEC. The Ministry of National Planning (formerly Economic Development) has been conspicuously involved in decisions and actions regarding Nigeria's role in ECOWAS. The same can be said of the military towards Nigeria's peace-keeping role. Also in drafting treaties and bilateral agreements, the Ministry of Justice plays a major role, just as the Ministry of Finance is directly involved in determining Nigeria's relations with the World Bank (IBRD) and IMF. Thus, several Ministries and departments are involved at various levels and on various issues in making foreign policy. Such involvement is inevitable and entails co-operation and sometimes conflict within the bureaucracy.

There are a number of ways by which the bureaucracy makes policy. They include:

1. initiating policy-proposals based on its knowledge of events in the country's domestic and external environment. The proposal may originate from any staff at a level in the hierarchy and moves vertically to the levels above for consideration. Some policy-decisions can be made at levels below the Permanent Secretary. Many others reach the Permanent Secretary and from him to the Minister, both of whom make considerable policy decisions. Each Ministry in effect has considerable authority

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34. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Official Gazette, no. 33, vol. 52 of 9th April 1965 on "Assignment of Responsibilities to Federal Ministries" pp. 650-53; also in Idang Gordon, J., Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy 1960-1966, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1973, p. 115.

to take certain decisions and actions on behalf of the government. If an issue and its implications are beyond the authority of the Ministry, then the Minister will take it to the President-in-Council for consideration and decision. If the matter involves (as it often does) the activities of other Ministries, the views of such Ministries will be sought. Usually because of differences in perception and interests, there will be some areas of conflict, even where they agree on the basic issue. On receipt of study-papers from relevant Ministries, the Council will then deliberate and decide one way or another.

2. Preparing policy-papers for the Chief Executives is another way by which the bureaucracy helps to make policy. Most Ministers depend on the information and advice of the bureaucrats for much of their work. Ministers have sometimes been selected from among people who have had no previous experience in government. Such Ministers usually rely on (or echo) the ideas of the bureaucrats. Even among those with some experience in government, when assigned to different Ministries or functions, they would need to understand the intricacies of the new Ministry before effectively facing the task. In the meantime they would depend on the work of the bureaucrats, to the effect that sometimes policy-decisions are made and passed to him for endorsement. Again, Ministers tend to be preoccupied with day-to-day matters as to have no time for long term policy planning. As a result the civil servant has to do the planning and propose the policy for the Minister. When therefore a Minister takes a memorandum to

the Council for deliberation, it contains sometimes entirely the ideas and work of the civil servants.<sup>35</sup>

3. The bureaucracy makes some policy-decisions in the process of implementing major foreign policy. Usually some directives from above are either too broad or vague. It is within the bureaucracy that such directives are put into context for easy implementation. This involves making a number of other important decisions. Sometimes it involves major alterations that almost change the original policy.

A few observations about the Bureaucracy are worth making. Due to the overlap in functions of Ministries/departments, rivalry has become a common feature in bureaucratic decision-making. As foreign policy becomes more complex, involving political, economic, technical and cultural factors, there follows a substantial increase in the number of other bureaucracies which deal with foreign policy matters. The result is that in Nigeria defence, economic and information Ministries etc. have come to challenge the pre-eminent position of the Ministry of External Affairs in the making of foreign policy. The rivalry cited earlier, which has continued since the mid-sixties, between External Affairs and Information over responsibility for external publicity is one example. Recently (1980), the Ministry of Internal Affairs succeeded in taking over the issuance of passports and continues to insist on deploying its staff abroad for the purpose of issuing visas.

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35. For instance a former Secretary to the Federal Military Government, Mr. Allison Ayida claimed that the Nigerian civil servants were the originators and innovators of all major policy decisions in the country, in "An address to the Annual Conference of the Nigerian Economic Society, 1973".



Sometimes through bureaucratic delays some rivalries are allowed to run out of steam. Others are resolved through inter-departmental/Ministerial regulations or by the President-in-Council. Despite rivalry, the bureaucracy remains a constant pillar of successive governments in Nigeria.

Another observation on the bureaucracy is that in theory it is made up of 'obedient servants' of the Minister and the government, who keep records, advise ministers and carry out their directives. But in reality, civil servants are very powerful in government. They participate in policy making and its execution. Civil servants are practically involved in all activities of the government. They are collectively a reservoir of past-actions and precedent upon which current decisions are based. They provide expertise, initiate policies and advise Ministers on the merits and demerits of given policy options, which considerably determine what is acceptable as policy. In fact, civil servants are involved in making most decisions in government, they organise the structures involved in the process, they follow policies through, and maintain continuity. Although Ministers have substantial authority and their directives have to be obeyed, it is believed to be in their best interest to carry along the civil servants in the exercise of such authority. A Minister's success or failure is largely measured by the performance of his departmental duties, which in turn, is largely dependent on his subordinate staff's ability and willingness to get things done.

In a nutshell, a number of important policy decisions are made within the bureaucracy if both Ministers and bureaucrats possess sufficient knowledge and experience. Where a matter is to be decided by the Federal Executive Council, the bureaucrats prepare it in the form of a memorandum (study paper) to form the basis of Council discussion. This is a general procedure for all Ministries. At the Council level, the Ministers are assisted by bureaucrats who also afford expert advice to facilitate consideration of some policy proposals. In summary, the bureaucracy is involved in foreign policy making through policy decisions at various levels of authority in the administrative hierarchy, through inter-ministerial consultation, and co-ordination of policy decisions and actions, and through the activities in Council of the political heads of the Ministries.

#### THE MILITARY

The role of the Military in making Nigerian foreign policy is not in doubt. Prior to 1966, the Military had no identifiable influence in policy making but since then it has been very much involved in making national policy, of which foreign policy is an aspect. The involvement is due to the fact that the military has been in government for a much longer time than the politicians. Under military rule, the Head of State is an army officer; the Supreme Military Council - which is the highest organ of the Military Governments - consists of mainly top-ranking military officers;

and the Federal Executive Council already discussed consists of both military officers and civilians. The Councils meet under the chairmanship of the Head of State or in his absence the Chief of Staff, who are military personnel, to deliberate on national issues. Foreign policy decisions made during military rule obviously have direct participation by the military. Between 1975 and 1979, top military personnel held the post of the Commissioner (Minister) of External Affairs and by virtue of that position, were undoubtedly involved in making foreign policy.

The increasing consciousness about national security has given the military in Nigeria, as elsewhere, greater prominence than hitherto in foreign policy decision-making. Hence the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria established a National Defence Council,<sup>36</sup> made up of the Chief of Defence Staff, the Head of the Army, the Head of the Navy, and the Head of the Air Force, generally referred to as "the Service Chiefs", with the statutory role "to advise the President on matters relating to the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria".<sup>37</sup> By this provision, the military has been given the power to determine what constitutes a threat to the Sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria - which as we know is the cardinal objective of its foreign policy. They also have the power to determine the appropriate response to such threat. With the military having the instrument of coercion, it may not only "advise" but may insist that its

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36. The Constitution (1979), Third Schedule Part I-E.

37. Ibid., item 10.



ideas prevail. For example, in the Nigeria/Cameroun border dispute, referred to earlier, the President held hours of meeting with the National Defence Council to deliberate on the crisis. It is strongly believed that the advice of that Council, among others, for a conciliatory approach prevailed against the opposite views in favour of retaliatory measures. Another evidence of the role of the military in national policy making is the high position of the Chief of Defence Staff in the National Security Council.<sup>38</sup> He comes next after the President and Vice-President. Also section 197 -1(a) and (b) of the Constitution assigned to the military the function of "defending Nigeria from external aggression" and "maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea or air".<sup>39</sup> If these functions are to be formed properly, the military has to be involved in the formulation of overall national security policy, which is inextricably linked with foreign policy. This link perhaps explains the presence of Defence Attachees in some Nigerian Embassies/High Commissions.

With the military as the alternate government of Nigeria (as at the moment), it therefore becomes a regular participant in the formulation and execution of foreign policy. Whether the continuing involvement of the military directly in making foreign policy is more in the national interest than in its

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38. Ibid., Third Schedule Part I-H.

39. Also see: Princewell, I.E. (Lt. Commander NN) on "Protecting the Nigerian Territorial Waters"; and Omojokun S.K. (Colonel), on "The Role of the Army in Nation Building"; being lectures delivered to the new entrants to the Nigerian Foreign Service in Lagos on 20th June 1979.

interest as an institution remains debateable.

Generally, we have identified and examined seven major institutional structures that are involved directly in making Nigerian foreign policy. These structures vary in their levels of authority. The scope of responsibility for foreign policy making also varies with each structure. Essentially, the functions of one compliment the others. Having discussed the role of each structure in making foreign policy, we will illustrate in the next chapter the process of harmonizing the functions of the structures in policy making.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE PROCESS

In the last chapter, we identified and examined the machinery of foreign policy making in Nigeria. Here we will try to explain how the machinery works in making foreign policy. Put differently, we will try to answer the question - how is foreign policy made in Nigeria? A summary answer to the question is that foreign policy is made through harmonization of inputs of support and demands from the domestic and external environments of Nigeria, by persons in institutional positions having statutory responsibility to do so in accordance with given principles, for the purpose of attaining the objectives and goals of the country. Such an answer incorporates the component parts of the subject as discussed in this work. We still need to illustrate the process of harmonization in decision-making.

### EXPLAINING THE PROCESS

One common way of explaining "the how" of policy making is to represent a formal organisation chart with little boxes and lines showing the vertical and horizontal flow of communication between formal office holders. The chart could be used to illustrate the hierarchical structure of government organisation with authority varying from apex to the base of the structure. It will show lines representing flow of information and advice moving in a vertical direction from base, i.e. the low level bureaucrats, upwards through heads of sections/departments to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister, from there to the Federal Executive Council and the Presidency. A corresponding line will represent a downward



flow from the apex of directives that are to be carried out. The chart will also show a horizontal line of relationship between the Ministry of External Affairs and other Ministries that share with it joint responsibility for some external affairs matters, thereby portraying formal co-operation and collaboration of all ministries/agencies of government on all matters.

In theory the description of organisation chart is correct. In practice the little boxes and lines are not linked in the way the chart shows. The fact is that foreign policy decision-making has domestic and external environments, and human beings (with differing talents and idiosyncratic tendencies) are involved, not abstract boxes and lines. Second, it is the interaction between the human beings in the environments and those in policy-making positions (i.e. which constitute the machinery) that set the process in motion. Third, there are various levels of policy-making in any organisation. The level at which a policy is made depends mainly on the value and interests attached to the issue under consideration so that policy making is not exclusively done at the top of the organisation. Fourth, various units of the machinery (government agencies/departments) involved in policy making have overlapping functions), giving rise in some cases to co-operation and collaboration and in others to conflict and rivalry. Therefore communication flow and co-ordination are not as smooth and easy as the chart lines show. Nevertheless, an organisation chart is a useful shorthand notation of government administrative structure. It helps in understanding the relative positions of the structures and the power relationships, especially if it is accompanied by a careful explanation of how things get done.

In general, as noted above, how a policy issue is processed depends at what level it originates in the hierarchical structure of the organisation, the amount of interest it elicits and value attached to it by the policy makers. At every level of the organisation there are policy makers who make policy decisions commensurate with their level of authority. This point becomes clearer if it is understood that a policy is not a single decision but consists of many decisions made either at a given level or different levels and geared towards the realisation of certain objectives and goals. For our purpose here, three categories of policy corresponding with three levels of authority can be identified thus:

- 1) High level policy decisions,
- 2) Middle level policy decisions, and
- 3) Low level policy decisions.

One must bear in mind that there is no strict compartmentalisation of each category. The low level policy decisions are usually on minor routine matters arising within the general framework of policy of the government. Every matter in a Ministry or its department does not reach the Minister and not even the Permanent Secretary or Head of Department. As no person can alone carry out the entire work of a Ministry, there is inevitable delegation of duties to various departments, sections and grades of staff, so that even the clerical staff have their respective schedule of duties within which they take decisions and handle policy matters, no matter how minor, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Usually most decisions of a Ministry are assumed to have been made by the Permanent Secretary or on his behalf by a subordinate member of staff acting with his full knowledge and consent. But with some delegation of authority and the hope that other staff understand the general policy and thinking of their superior, several decisions are made without the prior consent of the Permanent Secretary.

Middle level policy decisions are made by officers in the middle of the hierarchy, generally known as the policy staff. In the Ministry of External Affairs, they are designated as External Affairs Officers and include the Ambassadors, Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretary, while in the home Ministries, they are designated as Administrative Officers. The staff in this category are believed to possess appropriate knowledge and experience to understand the programme of their Minister and the government in power at a certain time, and can therefore make suitable decisions that will enhance such a programme. They are expected to know the limits of their authority, beyond which they can only make recommendations of policy options to the Minister or through him to the President-in-Council for approval. Many policy decisions are made at the middle level of the hierarchical structure of government. This is because this level is made up of bureaucrats, many of whom have varied experience and skills for dealing with foreign governments. Unlike the Head of State (President), the Ministers and their advisers who are usually transitory, the bureaucracy, as stated earlier, has permanence, expertise and maintains records of past action and current information vital for developing and implementing foreign policy. According to Lloyd Jensen, the bureaucracy "makes decisions at each level as to what information and which issues will rise to the next level of decision making".<sup>2</sup> The same is true of the Nigerian bureaucracy, hence, as we noted earlier, the former Secretary to the Federal Military Government claimed "the Nigerian federal civil servants were and are likely

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2. Jensen, Lloyd, Explaining Foreign Policy, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982, p. 121.



to remain the originators and innovators of most major policy decisions in the country".<sup>3</sup>

If an issue emerges at any point on this level of government structure, either through the initiative of an officer or through pressure from the domestic or external environment, the issue is put forward in the form of a minute to another officer(s) higher in rank, for consideration. A decision may be taken and the matter concluded if it is within the competence of the officer to do so and if such matter does not have wider implications. But if the matter is beyond the authority at that level, it will then be expatiated upon, highlighting the various implications and possible alternatives, in another minute to the head of department for consideration or decision. Again, depending on the head of department's assessment of the issue, he could take a decision and give directives on what should be done next. The head of department could also decide to refer the issue to the Permanent Secretary for decision. After that, directives are given for implementation.

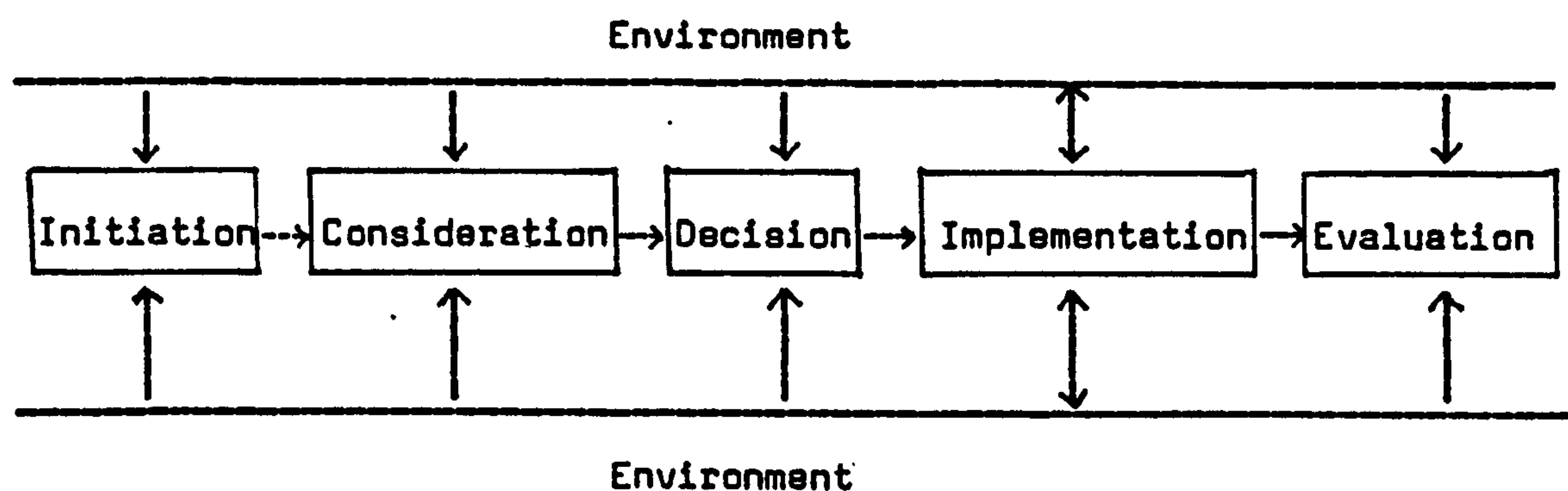
The high level policy decisions are made by the Minister, the Council (Supreme Military and Federal Executive) and the President jointly or separately after due consultations. Foreign policy issues considered at this level may be initiated by any of the personalities in the group, or come from a memorandum submitted by other government agencies or departments in the middle stratum of government hierarchy. They may also arise from direct pressure from the domestic or external environment. From whatever source, such foreign policy issues are discussed jointly and decisions taken and forwarded to the appropriate agency/department for implementation.

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3. Ayida, Allison, An address to the annual conference of the Nigerian Economic Society, 1973.

From the foregoing explanations, it is apparent that the foreign policy process follows an identifiable pattern in which a policy issue is initiated at a point in the organisational structure, and moves to another (higher) point for consideration. After that a decision is made either at that point or another higher level. The decision is usually accompanied by some directives for implementation. Then the impact of such decision will be assessed in relation to the intended objective, the type of response it elicits and other feed-back emanating from there. This general trend in foreign policy making in Nigeria can be represented as in the figure below.

Figure X: A REPRESENTATION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS



This figure is perhaps simple and illustrative enough of the stages which every policy passes through during formulation. It shows the ordering of activities in the foreign policy process. The scheme illustrates that the foreign policy process has an environment within which exist factors (already discussed) like cultural institutions, public opinion, the National Assembly, political parties (in the domestic environment), ECOWAS, OAU, Commonwealth, UNO, IBRD, IMF (external environment) that exert pressure and influence the functioning of the machinery, the policy outputs and

policy outcomes. It is clear from the trend that policy making begins when an issue is initiated or enters the policy structure at a point where it receives attention. The issue then moves from the point of entry or initiation through consideration to decision, and from there, if a final decision is to proceed with a course of action, to implementation and evaluation. This is virtually how every foreign policy decision is made.

For example, every day several despatches, reports, telegrams, aides memoires and notes verbales pour into the Ministry of External Affairs, reporting events all over the world - viz. a coup d'etat has occurred in Liberia; Israeli forces have invaded West Beirut; Thatcher invites to Britain Piki Botha of South Africa; Moscow denies a Nigerian student permission to marry his Soviet girl friend, etc. These are cases that capture the attention of government officials who decide to report on them. There are many other cases which are of equal interest to the Nigerian government but which have not received the attention of the appropriate officials. As the reports reach the Ministry, they are sent to the specialist Ministries/Departments for consideration. Each report will then be examined and analysed in the light of some general conception of the Nigerian interests on which the events may impinge. Proposals for action or inaction may be put forward to another group of officials higher in the hierarchy of government for further consideration and decision. Sometimes some proposals are decisions that need the concurrence of the immediate superior to become authoritative and binding. At other times, some proposals have to pass through many levels of authority for consideration before a final decision can be made at the top of the hierarchy. Once a decision is reached, it is passed to the



appropriate Ministry or department for implementation. After that the impact will be evaluated.

A few case studies of foreign policy decision-making will help to make the process clearer. These include (i) the decision to sell Nigerian oil at concessionary prices to African countries; (ii) Nigeria's decision to accord recognition to the MPLA Government of Angola; and (iii) Nigeria's peace-keeping operations in the Chad Republic. We will explain how these decisions were made, the agencies/departments of government that took the decisions; and why the government made such decisions. It must be noted that among the criticisms of case studies is the tendency, according to W.I. Jenkins, to present a partial and incomplete view of the dynamics and totality of the policy process.<sup>4</sup> Part of the reason is that some writers focus attention on few personalities while negating the organisation as a whole and the variety of participants in the policy process as well as the environmental pressures on the machinery. Our reader must therefore note that in the examples below, we will try to emphasise the organs and departments of government that participated directly in making the decisions rather than the individual whose role might have been to endorse the ideas of others in subordinate positions.

#### THE DECISION TO SELL NIGERIA'S OIL AT CONCESSIONARY PRICES FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES

In early July 1974, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria decided to supply crude oil to African states at a reduced rate of US \$9 a barrel while the posted price from OPEC for Nigerian oil

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4. Jenkins, W.I., Policy Analysis: A Political and Organisational Perspective. Martin Robertson, London, 1978, pp. 19-20.

was US \$14.191 per barrel.<sup>5</sup> The decision was in response to demands by some African countries for Nigerian crude oil at cheaper rates than the prevailing prices in the world then. To appreciate the uniqueness of this decision, we will have a quick look at the background of Nigeria's oil pricing policy.

#### BACKGROUND OF OIL PRICING POLICY

Crude oil has been in production in Nigeria since 1956 when the first oil well was discovered at Oloibiri in the eastern part of Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> From that time, the major policy of the Nigerian government was to attract and encourage foreign companies with expertise and equipment for oil prospecting, exploration and production. As part of the inducement, the early companies were granted liberal concessions to produce and market Nigeria's crude oil. By 1959 the Petroleum Profit Tax Ordinance was introduced and it provided for 50%-50% profit sharing with the oil companies, of which the companies determined the profit to be shared. In effect, the oil companies determined the quantity of oil to be produced, fixed and varied the prices at which oil was sold without government supervision or control. Profits were based on realised prices, which fluctuated widely from company to company and from oil shipment to oil shipment. It became obvious to the Federal Government of Nigeria that the country was losing much revenue from the oil-profit arrangement.

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5. Central Bank of Nigeria, Economic and Financial Review, vol. 20, no. 1, June 1982, p. 11.

6. The search for deposits of crude oil in Nigeria was begun by Shell-D'Arcy Exploration Parties in 1937. It was only in 1956 that a team of drillers from Shell-BP Development Company of Nigeria struck oil at Oloibiri in Eastern Nigeria.

From 1966 to 1971, Nigeria based its calculation of the oil companies' tax payments on the posted prices from other oil-producing countries whereby any better terms given to a producer country was automatically demanded by Nigeria.<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Mines and Power which had statutory responsibility for supervising and co-ordinating the activities of the petroleum industry had then few people with professional knowledge of the industry. This made it difficult to formulate a coherent petroleum policy and petroleum price policy. By 1970 it was clear that Libya and Algeria, both of which countries have a similar quality of crude oil as Nigeria, were earning more per barrel than Nigeria. As a result and coupled with the desire to learn from the experiences of other oil-producing countries, Nigeria joined OPEC in 1971. In that same year, the Federal Government established the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC) but it did not function until 1973. The Corporation was assigned the responsibility to explore, prospect, produce, store, transport and market crude petroleum and its refined products. When NNOC started operation early in 1973, the government had no definite oil pricing policy, except to implement OPEC resolutions on prices. However, NNOC had many technical problems and was reorganised in 1977 into a agency known as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

The oil price escalation in the world market from 1970 to 1974, due to an increase in demand for crude oil, led OPEC members to introduce significant changes in the structure of oil prices and in tax and royalty rates. The new pricing formula was based on the official selling prices rather than posted price.<sup>8</sup> Individual

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7. Central Bank of Nigeria, op. cit., p. 6.

8. Ibid., p. 16.



exporting countries were allowed to determine the prices of particular crude oil using OPEC approved formula. For example, Nigerian oil with low sulphur content is considered to be relatively superior to others with high sulphur content and therefore attracts a higher price in the international oil market. As a result, the Federal Military Government became more interested and involved in marketing Nigerian crude oil. Revenue from oil tripled.

While Nigeria was benefiting from the oil price escalation, many non-oil producing countries of Africa were unable to pay the high price of oil and therefore were hard-hit by the energy crisis. Consequently there were external bilateral pressures on Nigeria to help poorer African countries in need of crude oil. The earliest demands came from neighbouring countries in West Africa - Ghana, Sierra Leone, Togo and Liberia, asking for oil at cheaper rates. Since there was no definable Nigerian pricing policy, it was difficult to respond meaningfully to these pressures. In the wake of the Yom Kippur war of October 1973, the world energy crisis increased. The war-affected oil producing Arab countries placed embargoes on their oil being sold to certain countries including the USA, Netherlands and South Africa. Arab countries organised a cutback in their oil production. The effect was a substantial increase in the demand for available oil and market prices rose sharply. Truly, the US and some West European countries were badly hit by the energy crisis but the non-oil producing African countries were more affected because they had not enough foreign exchange to pay the very high oil prices. Consequently many African countries stepped up their demand for

Nigeria's oil at concessionary rates. Nigeria then decided to sell crude oil to African countries at reduced rates. Thus a formal Nigerian oil pricing policy started with the world energy crisis of 1973-74.

#### INFLUENCES ON DECISION-MAKING

A number of internal and external factors influenced Nigeria's response to the demands of African countries. Among the internal factors, the first is the altruistic tendency of Nigerian policy-makers, who feel psychologically and morally bound to help other African countries. The concept of altruism has been explained in chapter five. Second, the phenomenal increase in oil production which in that year was at an average of 2.3 million barrels a day, putting Nigeria as the sixth largest world oil producer, encouraged Nigeria's policy-makers to consider the demands sympathetically in the hope that about 3 per cent of the oil which would be demanded by African countries might not affect adversely Nigeria's development plans. Third, there was in that year, a remarkable rise to about US \$1 billion in Nigeria's earnings from oil and also the prospect of more oil revenue in the years ahead. The fourth factor on the other side of the pendulum were Nigeria's internal economic necessities like the demands for reconstruction, renovation and rehabilitation of civil war damages, and the much needed funds for Nigeria's Third National Development Plan (1975-80) estimated to cost Naira 53 billion. To many Nigerians at the time, just as it appeared that their country's revenue was rising, so it appeared that demands on the revenue were enormous. It was thus difficult from the beginning to determine the nature of concessions

to be given to African countries. The decision was at every stage controversial.

External pressures on Nigeria also had an impact on the decision process. There were bilateral pressures from African countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Togo. Others include Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia, whose conditions were quite pathetic, and which needed to be rescued to minimise dependence on South Africa which had then come under Arab oil embargo. Pressures on Nigeria also came from the Organisation of African Unity. The OAU expressed concern for the hardship of non-oil producing African countries and so urged both Nigeria and other oil producing countries to aid these African states. By 1973, the OAU had set up a committee of seven member states to approach oil producing states to help the hard-hit African countries.<sup>9</sup> Another influence on Nigeria arose from the actions of the oil producing Arab states. The Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC)<sup>10</sup> instead of preferential oil prices for African countries, resolved to set up an Arab Bank for Industrial and Agricultural Development in Africa as part of their contribution to general development. To some extent, this was seen as a challenge to Nigeria, as an oil producing country in Africa, to show its concern for the hardship occasioned by the energy crisis. Other pressures on the federal military government came from the UN General Assembly (sixth Special Session, April-May 1974), the World Bank and IMF, urging OPEC member states to

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9. Aluko, O, Essays on Nigerian Foreign Policy. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1981, p. 203.

10. The Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries consists of Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.



assist the oil-importing developing countries. Amidst these demands and pressures, decision-makers in Nigeria started to search for the best way to help alleviate the hardship of other African states arising from the energy crisis.

#### THE DECISION-MAKERS

The major participants in the decision in 1974 to sell Nigerian crude oil to African countries at reduced rates were (1) the Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon and his advisers, aided by the senior staff of both the State House and the Cabinet Office, chief among them being the Secretary to the Federal Military Government. Since the Head of State has over-riding responsibility for the country's foreign policy, he thus exercised supreme authority over the decision to sell Nigerian crude oil to African countries; (2) The Federal Executive Council,<sup>11</sup> as already stated, is the central policy-making body for the country. It was in the Council that differing views and concerns about Nigeria's oil policy were harmonized; (3) The Ministry of Mines and Power, and its arm - the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC). The Ministry had statutory responsibility for petroleum exports and for co-ordination and control of the activities of the oil companies. It was therefore directly involved in initiating petroleum policy proposals; (4) The Ministry of External Affairs, with primary responsibility for co-ordinating Nigeria's external relations and foreign policy, was thus involved at all stages in the decision-making process; (5) The Ministry of Finance had an indispensable

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11. Membership of both the Supreme Military Council and Federal Executive Council overlapped at the time. For reasons already explained, the Federal Executive Council exercised the power to make policy for the country.

role in the decision because it has primary responsibility for co-ordinating the country's fiscal plans and policies. Although other Ministries and Departments of government were involved in the decision-making especially through their Commissioners in the Federal Executive Council, the five structures above were the key decision-makers<sup>12</sup> on this particular issue.

### THE DECISION PROCESS

The earliest requests for Nigerian oil at concessionary prices came in mid-1972 through diplomatic channels to the Ministry of External Affairs in Lagos. These were from the High Commissions of Sierra Leone and Ghana in Lagos, followed later in the year by the Embassies of Liberia and Togo. Similar requests were also made through Nigerian diplomatic missions in these countries, as reflected in their despatches to the Ministry of External Affairs. Copies of the notes/despaches were forwarded to relevant departments/Ministries for consideration and necessary action. The subsequent decision to sell Nigeria's crude oil to African countries at concessionary prices passed through all the stages in the process of foreign policy making, shown in figure X, above. The decision was perceived from the beginning to be likely to attract several interests and so the government allowed full participation of all relevant Ministries/departments. In the Federal Executive Council there was lengthy debate and deliberation on the memoranda submitted by the appropriate Ministries regarding the demands of African countries. Some official sources reveal,

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12. For details of some dominant personalities from the organs/ Ministries, see O. Aluko, op. cit., pp. 200-202.

contrary to the impression given by Aluko,<sup>13</sup> that the Federal Military Government did not turn down the request of any African country for Nigerian oil at reduced rates. Rather, at the time the earliest requests were made, there was hardly any Nigerian oil pricing policy.<sup>14</sup> This was partly responsible for the delay in responding to the requests. Another reason for the delay was because the relevant Ministries responsible for initiating action on the demands were at the time undergoing some reorganisation.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the earliest requests scarcely received any detailed examination due to inadequate information about the country's oil production level at the time, the scope of the oil market, the pricing system and future prospects of the industry.

In actual fact, the process of the decision only began in earnest in late 1973 when as a result of continued pressure from African countries, the world oil crisis, and government take-over of control and supervision of the oil industry, then the Ministry of External Affairs asked its departments of African Affairs and International Economic Co-operation, to bring up for consideration the previous reports and renewed requests for crude oil at concessionary prices. At this time, the relevant departments had some experienced senior officers with good technical knowledge and the Ministry also had collected some essential information about the oil industry and pricing system. A report was therefore initiated by a First Secretary in the Department of

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13. Ibid., pp. 202-204.

14. Interview.

15. There was the 1972 reorganisation of the Ministry of External Affairs, resulting in, among other things, strengthening of the Departments of African Affairs and International Economic Co-operation. There was a similar reorganisation and upgrading of the Department of Petroleum in the Ministry of Mines and Power and the reinforcing of NNOC for a more effective role.



African Affairs, summarising the demands by African countries, summing up the quantity of Nigerian oil likely to be required by the countries and the estimated value, which the report said would not be substantially different from Nigeria's projected expenditure on aid to African countries. The report concluded with an assessment of the political and economic advantages and disadvantages of selling Nigerian crude oil at reduced rates to African countries. It was then submitted to the Head of Department for consideration and he in turn recommended the report to the Permanent Secretary for sympathetic consideration. The Department of International Economic Co-operation was in agreement with the submission of African Affairs Department and urged that because the demand will rise over time, any oil price concession must be considered as part of the total aid that Nigeria could afford with minimum burden on the national economy. From the Permanent Secretary the report went to the Minister of External Affairs for consideration. In the end, the Minister, Permanent Secretary and other senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs were unanimous in supporting concessionary sales.

A similar procedure was followed by the Ministry of Mines and Power in considering the implications of the requests. Meanwhile the Head of State and other members of the Federal Executive Council were quite aware of the demands by some African countries for Nigerian oil at reduced rates and so wanted the relevant Ministries to examine the requests. Before submitting the report formally to the Head of State-in-Council, some lateral consultations took place between the Ministries. For example, the Ministry of External Affairs notified the Ministries of Mines and Power, Economic Development and Finance

of its (MEA's) position on the matter and the intention to present it to the Federal Executive Council for consideration and approval. At the same time, MEA was seeking the support of these Ministries for the proposal. Through such lateral consultations, the respective Ministries were aware of the points of common agreement as well as of reservation. All the Ministries were sympathetic to the plight of the African countries but there was expressed concern about the state of Nigeria's economy and the extra burden to be imposed on it if such concessions were granted in addition to the annual provision for aid to African countries.

At the Federal Executive Council, the memoranda from the relevant Ministries raised other significant issues including, for example, the possibility of some countries reselling the oil at higher prices on the open market. It was difficult to reach a decision without detailed consideration of the issues. With some adjournments, the Council deliberation lasted for weeks. Although minutes of the Council meeting remain classified, it appears that Council members were unanimous on the need for Nigeria to help alleviate the hardship of African countries but differed on the modality for such assistance. Consequently the FEC resolved to allow for further consideration of the requests. It therefore set up a working group to study the implications of selling oil at reduced rates to African countries and to make suitable recommendations to the government. The group consisted mainly of representatives of the Ministries of Mines and Power, External Affairs, Economic Development and Finance.

By mid-1974, the working group submitted its report which was

presented in a memorandum to the Federal Executive Council for deliberation and decision. The report favoured the sale of Nigeria's oil at concessionary prices for African countries and provided that such concession be given to African countries that have refineries and have promised that the oil will be for local consumption. It argued that such a gesture is in line with Nigeria's policy of aiding other African countries, and that only a small percentage – according to Aluko, "less than 3 per cent of Nigerian crude oil exports would be affected".<sup>16</sup> The Federal Executive Council had a considerable debate on the proposal. In the end the memorandum was adopted and passed to the relevant Ministries for implementation.

Thereafter, the first step was to inform through diplomatic channels the African countries that had asked for Nigerian oil at concessionary prices. Then the government announced publicly on 18th July 1974 its decision to sell oil at reduced rates to African countries.<sup>17</sup> The process involved in the above decision confirms our representation of the general trend of the foreign policy process at figure X, above. Essentially, the decision process started in earnest from the lower level in the hierarchy and moved upwards through other levels to the Federal Executive Council which made the final decision. From there it moved downwards for implementation.

#### NIGERIA'S DECISION TO ACCORD RECOGNITION TO THE MPLA GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA.

Nigeria announced its recognition of the MPLA government on 25th November 1975, almost two weeks after the declaration of

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16. Aluko, O., op. cit., p. 197.

17. Press statement by Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Mines and Power, Mr. Philip Asiodu on 18th July 1974. Also Daily Times, 19 July 1974.



Angolan independence. The decision was a reversal of Nigeria's earlier stand, in line with the Organisation of African Unity for a government of national unity in Angola. The announcement of the recognition was sudden and against the expectations of some of Nigeria's friends like the United States and its NATO allies who were suspicious of MPLA's link with USSR and therefore wanted in Angola a government other than by the MPLA. The concern and interest which Nigeria's recognition of MPLA aroused made the decision appear unique. What circumstances and pressures - internal and external - influenced the decision-makers? Who made the decision? How was the decision made? These are the questions we will address ourselves to below, bearing in mind that our answers to them will, of necessity, be circumscribed because the documents on this decision are still classified and not accessible.

### EXPLAINING THE EVENTS

Angola became independent on 11th November 1975 after the withdrawal of Portuguese forces without a formal handover of power. Three major liberation movements which had been fighting the Portuguese for many years for the independence of Angola, were left to fight amongst themselves for the formation of an independent government in the country. The three movements were - the Popular Front for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA); the National Front for Liberation of Angola (FNLA); and the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). There were other small liberation movements<sup>18</sup> and many ethnic/regional movements, with the most notable being the Cabinda movements<sup>19</sup> like CAUNC, CRC, FLEC and

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18. For a list of Angolan Nationalists Movements see Marcum, John A., The Angolan Revolution, vol. II, The Mit Press, Massachusetts, 1978, pp. 318-320.

19. These include "Comité d'Action d'Union Nationale des Cabindais" - CAUNC, "Comité Revolutionnaire Cabindais" - CRC; "Frente para libertação do Enclave de Cabinda" - FLEC; and "Mouvement pour la Libération de l'Enclave de Cabina" - MLEC. Ibid., p. 319.

MLEC, who were not fighting for independence per se, but for the secession of the oil-rich Cabinda Province from Angola. At independence, therefore, Angola was torn by these Liberation Movements. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) made unsuccessful efforts to reconcile the three major (plus FLEC) movements to form a government of national unity. The Federal Military Government of Nigeria had been in support of the OAU for a government of national unity. As would be expected in such a situation, the proposal was rejected by the warring factions. Shortly before independence, the MPLA had occupied Luanda, with its forces guarding all strategic locations. Having established control of the capital territory the MPLA proclaimed the "People's Republic of Angola"<sup>20</sup> and so celebrated independence in Luanda. On the other hand, the FNLA and UNITA, having lost control of Luanda, formed an alliance in August 1975 against the MPLA. The Alliance moved to the town of Huambo from where it celebrated the independence of what it called the "People's Democratic Republic of Angola".<sup>21</sup> It is apparent from this short account that MPLA was in a dominant position vis-a-vis other liberation movements.

Other events at the time helped to give the Angolan crisis its peculiar dimension. The struggle for power by the liberation movements became exacerbated with the involvement of foreign powers, notably the USSR, USA, China, South Africa and Cuba. The MPLA received massive support from USSR and Cuba, while the FNLA/UNITA had the support of USA, the Peoples Republic of China and South Africa. By late August 1975 South African soldiers invaded Angola

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20. Legum, Colin, and Hodges, Tony, After Angola - The War over Southern Africa. Rex Collins, London, 1976, p. 83. See "Dr. Agostinho Neto's Independence Day Speech".

21. Ibid., p. 82. See FNLA's President Mr. Holden Roberto's Proclamation of Independence at the 15th March Square of Ambriz.



in aid of the FNLA/UNITA alliance to stop the advance of MPLA forces southwards to occupy more territory. It was also learnt that France and Zaire were aiding the Cabinda secessionist movements.

This then was the prevailing situation in Angola at independence. Each liberation movement therefore became involved in a dual struggle to secure political base at home and diplomatic recognition abroad. The OAU and African countries were therefore lobbied for support. The OAU adopted a compromise stance of bringing all the parties together to form a national government. Nigeria was in line with the OAU and later the policy-makers decided to support one of the movements - the MPLA. However, before Nigeria's recognition, the MPLA government had been recognised by about 30 states, including some one-third of OAU's 46 members like the four former Portuguese colonies, Congo, Guinea, Somalia and Algeria as well as some East European countries.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE DECISION MAKERS

Before probing into why the decision was made, we will wish to know who took the decision to recognise the MPLA government. Following the change of government on 29th July 1975, a new military government, headed by Major-General (then Brigadier) Murtala Muhammed came to power in Nigeria. While the ousted government had two principal organs, the new government established three organs.<sup>23</sup> These were the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the National Council of States and the Federal Executive Council. The

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22. Ibid., p. 17 and pp. 9-41 for more background details.

23. The ousted government of General Yakubu Gowon had the Supreme Military Council and the Federal Executive Council. The Muhammed government introduced a third organ called "National Council of States". See A Time for Action, op. cit., p. 4.



Head of State was the Chairman of the three Councils. The Supreme Military Council was the highest body in the hierarchy, providing the general policy guidelines within which the affairs of the nation was conducted.<sup>24</sup> Its functions show that it must have given the lead in the decision to recognise the MPLA government. The reconstituted Supreme Military Council comprised the Head of State Major General Murtala Muhammed, the Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters (then Brigadier) Olusegun Obasanjo; the Chief of Army Staff (then Brigadier) T-Y. Danjuma, Chief of Naval Staff Commodore M.A. Adelanwa, Chief of Air Staff Col. John Yisa-Doko, the Inspector-General of Police Mr. M.D. Yusufu, all divisional military commanders and selected senior officers in the Army, Navy, Airforce and the Police.<sup>25</sup> Altogether, there were twenty-two members. Unlike previously, the Supreme Military Council under Muhammed wielded much power, leaving subsidiary powers to the Federal Executive Council and the National Council of States.

Under Muhammed the National Council of States was next to SMC in the hierarchy of governmental structure. The National Council comprised of the Head of State as chairman, key members of the SMC<sup>26</sup> and the military governors of states. This Council was concerned with matters affecting the states. Its activities were subject to the general supervision and direction of the Supreme Military Council.

The Federal Executive Council which under Gowon was the central policy making body for the country, was under Muhammed relegated to the third level in the hierarchy of governmental structure. Its function was limited to execution of the policy of the

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24. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

25. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

26. The key members of the Supreme Military Council were the Head of State, Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, Service-Chiefs, Commissioner for External Affairs and Inspector General of Police.

## Federal Military Government.

The office of Head of State is another important part of government that plays a key role in decision-making. At this time, it comprised the Head of State Major General Murtala Muhammed, the Committee of Advisers,<sup>27</sup> the Secretary to Federal Military Government Alhaji Adamu Ciroma with outstanding experience in government, and senior officers in the State House and Cabinet Office. Collectively, these contribute to the ideas and image of the President or Head of State. Whenever there is a change of government, the new leader relies considerably on the staff of this Office to understand the rudiments of the Presidency. Since with the exception of Murtala Muhammed who was briefly a federal Commissioner for Communication, members of the other three organs already discussed had almost no previous experience in government, the staff of the State House/Cabinet Office and Advisers were therefore most useful.

From this account of that government's top decision making organs, it is apparent that two major organs - the office of the Head of State (Cabinet Office) and the Supreme Military Council - were directly involved in the decision to recognise the MPLA government.

The Ministry of External Affairs also must have been directly involved in the decision process, especially as recognition is a diplomatic action. At the head of the Ministry was Commissioner for

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27. These were from the Universities, Press, Nigerian Society of International Affairs and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, and include Dr. Bolaji Akinyemi, Dr. Bala Usman and Haroun Adamu. Their role in the decision to recognise MPLA was invaluable. Some of them, like Dr. Bolaji Akinyemi who was the closest adviser to both Joe Garba and Muhammed/Obasanjo, remained as advisers on foreign policy matters until 1979.



External Affairs Major General (then Colonel) Joseph Garba, who was also a member of the Supreme Military Council. He was assisted by a Permanent Secretary Alhaji M.A. Sanusi, former Nigerian Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Others involved include the Director and staff of the Ministry's Department of African Affairs as well as the Nigerian diplomatic missions in Southern Africa. The collation of information, preparing reports, briefs and proposals on the situation in Angola, done by the Ministry, formed the basis of debate and deliberation of the government. Having considered the decision-makers,<sup>28</sup> the next question is, what circumstances and pressures influenced the decision-makers?

#### ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON THE DECISION-MAKERS

A number of events occurred both within and outside Nigeria that year which facilitated Nigeria's recognition of the MPLA government.

#### Internal Factors

The main internal factor is political - General Murtala Muhammed becoming Nigeria's new Head of State. In a televised broadcast, he expressed the desire "to give the nation a new lease of life, and sense of direction"<sup>29</sup> and was prepared to maintain a tough stance on various national issues.<sup>30</sup> Having organised a military coup and seized power from General Gowon who had fought successfully to keep Nigeria united and also had achieved popularity abroad, it

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28. In addition to the Head of State and his office staff, the SMC, and Ministry of External Affairs, there were Ministries of Defence and Finance, and the military, involved at different stages of the process.

29. Muhammed Murtala, A Time for Action. Department of Information, Federal Government of Nigeria, Lagos, 1980, p. 2.

30. Every military government in Nigeria since 1966 had, on assumption of office, adopted a tough stance as a means of winning domestic support/warding off opposition, but only to relax such stance later.



became compelling for the new government to win popularity at home and abroad by demonstrating its superiority over the previous administration. In effect, the new government was anxious to establish its presence on the world scene and the situation in Angola offered the opportunity. The government believed that to take a different position from its predecessor in the Angolan case would certainly attract more attention.

Public opinion in Nigeria has always been against colonialism and imperialism, symbolised by the capitalist countries of Western Europe, who are believed to have been responsible both for the underdevelopment of Africa and for many of the existing problems and conflicts in the continent. The consequence is the suspicion and distrust of virtually every Western design in Africa. Therefore, any party/movement supported by the West is regarded as imperialist agent. Every new leader perceives foreign policy to be concerned with the protection of the independence and rights of all black people against their oppressors and usually begins with an attack on colonialism and imperialism. In so doing, public support is assumed. Indeed, all through the war against Portugal, enlightened opinion in Nigeria urged the Federal Government to give every possible assistance to the liberation movements<sup>31</sup> to defeat Portuguese colonial forces.

At independence, public opinion in Nigeria acclaimed the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule and while expressing hope for better political development in Angola, called on African countries to prevent further imperialist intervention by taking

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31. All three liberation movements had maintained close relations with Nigeria (FNLA since 1960s) and received assistance in one form or another.

the necessary action to restore normality in Angola. For example, New Nigerian<sup>32</sup> and the Daily Times<sup>33</sup> drew attention to South African and United States intervention as undermining the efforts of OAU to resolve the crisis in Angola. The newspapers urged the Federal Military Government to take appropriate action to prevent a repeat of the Congo debacle in Angola. The Sunday Times of November 16, 1975 was quite specific in asking the Nigerian Government to recognise the MPLA government. A few Nigerian academics favoured MPLA among others, while denouncing the proposal for a government of national unity as being conciliatory. However, the extent to which public opinion influenced the decision-makers is not known but under the peculiar political circumstances of the new government, public opinion could not have been totally ignored.

The military and economic capacity of Nigeria do not seem to have had particular influence on the decision to recognise the MPLA government. But the significant increase in the country's revenue in the period due essentially to the phenomenal rise in the prices of oil might have added to the general confidence and tone of optimism of Nigerian leaders in international relations.

#### External Factors

The main event outside Nigeria that influenced the government's decision was the South African intervention in Angola. There were reports of South African occupation of parts of Angola in a bid to oust the MPLA government. The federal government authorities in Lagos were indignant at the news of South African activities in

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32. New Nigerian, 6 September 1975.

33. Daily Times, 20 November, 1975.

Angola. Having learnt that the other liberation movements FNLA and UNITA had links with the apartheid government of South Africa which provided them with military assistance against MPLA, the Nigerian government then concluded that FNLA and UNITA were not real nationalist movements. It was argued, and very strongly too, that "if we recognise any movement in Angola that dines with Africa's number one enemy, then our hope for the liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa from apartheid and colonialist regimes in that region, would have been dashed".<sup>34</sup> Thus, it was the collaboration with South Africa that disqualified FNLA and UNITA in the consideration of the Nigerian government, while the Cabinda movements were seen as separatist groups and so did not come into consideration.

The MPLA's apparently superior position vis-a-vis the other liberation movements, might have influenced the decision of the Nigerian government. The MPLA had shortly before independence occupied the Angolan capital of Luanda and was thus in control of the country's political and administrative centre. This was very advantageous. Militarily its forces were strong enough to drive out of Luanda the other two liberation movements and occupy strategic positions in defence of the territory. The MPLA also organised a strong resistance against the South African soldiers. Its display of military strength and courage commended it to the Nigerian government. Politically it was believed to be a foremost nationalist movement that could identify with the aspirations of Nigeria and OAU for the total liberation of the continent from colonialism and apartheid.

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34. Interview.



Finally some of the radical African states had recognised the MPLA government on the day of independence. These include Guinea (Conakry), Algeria, Congo and the newly independent Portuguese-speaking African countries of Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. These recognitions might have influenced the government of Nigeria, hitherto grouped among the conservative African states, which decided to act in line with the radical states by recognising the MPLA government. Having examined some of the domestic and external influences on the Nigerian decision to recognise the MPLA, we will proceed to consider how the decision was arrived at.

#### THE DECISION PROCESS

The Nigerian decision to recognise Angola has been seen by some commentators including a few Nigerian leaders as the making of General Murtala Muhammed. In a lecture on "The Role of the Army in Nation Building", a senior Army Officer attributed what he described as "Nigeria's achievement in Angola" to the bold initiative and dynamic leadership of the Head of State at that time, General Muhammed.<sup>35</sup> A Nigerian scholar also wrote thus:

"The decision to recognise the MPLA government was taken between November 20th and 25th - the date it was announced. There was no doubt that Muhammed took the decision himself. He later involved the SMC. Some of the members of the SMC, including the Commissioner for External Affairs, did not agree with the decision." <sup>36</sup>

Even Professor O. Aluko noted "It was widely believed that the late Head of State unilaterally took the decision to recognise the MPLA government late in November 1975".<sup>37</sup> Such a view is

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35. From a talk to a group of newly recruited foreign service officers on Induction Course, Lagos, 1979.

36. Sotunmbi, Abiodun O, Nigeria's Recognition of the MPLA Government of Angola: a case-study in Decision-Making and Implementation, Monograph, Series No. 9. The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1981, pp. 22-23.

37. Aluko, Olajide, op. cit., p. 247, fn. 49.

quite simplistic and difficult to accept for the available facts and sequence of events leading to the recognition prove that the decision was not made by one man alone. In fact, the decision followed the general process from initiation to consideration, decision, implementation and evaluation. It also involved the participation of appropriate governmental institutions and officials, some of which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. Moreover the decision was not a five day affair as Sotunmbi wrote. This will be explained briefly.

The emergence through a military coup of a new government, at the end of July 1975, made up of persons with little or no previous experience in government has obvious implications.

(1) The fear of possible counter-coups implied that none of the new leaders could take each other for granted at that early stage and that they therefore would seek consultation and co-operation on substantive issues, of which the recognition of MPLA was one. (2) Among the reasons advanced by Muhammed for overthrowing Gowon's government was "lack of consultation" and disregard of official advice.<sup>38</sup> Arguably it would be absurd for the same Muhammed to take a unilateral decision,<sup>39</sup> within a few months of assuming office, on a foreign policy issue of great importance. (3) Given the limited educational background and experience in government of the military leadership, it might not have been possible to make such a decision without proper briefing on the history of the Angolan revolution, the strengths and

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38. Muhammed, Murtala, A Time for Action, op. cit., pp. 1, 2.

39. To disprove the theory of unilateral decisions by Muhammed, General Obasanjo (next in command to Muhammed) confirmed "the collective character of the administration which succeeded the Gowon regime" when he said "It was, and still is, an administration that believes firmly in collective responsibility" - Daily Sketch, June 8, 1976, p. 16.



weaknesses of the multiplicity of the (over 80) liberation movements in Angola as well as the nature and scope of foreign intervention in Angola. Above all, there must have been some discussion and debate on the implications of competing options for Nigeria in Angola. Unless it is argued that the decision to recognise the MPLA government was made without considering all these facts or that it was blindly made, which I think was not the case, it will be hardly convincing to say that Nigeria's decision to recognise the MPLA government was a one-man decision.

The argument here is that the decision was jointly made by a number of governmental institutions, already discussed and for ease of reference, these include the Supreme Military Council, the Cabinet Office, the Ministries of External Affairs, Defence and Finance and representatives of the armed forces. Also, the decision involved the established process of initiating briefs (i.e. policy proposals in form of memoranda) from the ministries to the Cabinet Office for consideration and from there to the SMC for deliberation and adoption of the preferable policy option. These views are supported by events in the early months of the new regime and the process of the decision to be explained below.

Due to the collapse of the transitional government provided by the Alvor Agreement<sup>40</sup> signed in the Portuguese town of Algarve on 15th January 1975, and the failure of the OAU's Nakuru Agreement<sup>41</sup> reached under the chairmanship of President Kenyatta on 15th June 1975, there was an end to any hope of forming a government of national unity before the date for independence (November) that year. Even the OAU summit meeting in Kampala at the end of July

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40. For some details of "The Alvor Agreement" and "Nakuru Agreement" see Legum and Hodges, op. cit., pp. 47-55.

41. Ibid., pp. 47-55.



1975 (which Gowon was attending when he was overthrown) recognised that the hitherto local power struggle had turned into full-scale civil war. From that time, all the four major liberation movements in Angola were concerned with winning foreign military and political support.

With the emergence of a new government in Nigeria, the FNLA, MPLA and UNITA quickly sent their representatives to Lagos to explain their respective positions and to try to win the support of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria. The FNLA delegation arrived in Lagos during the third week of August followed the next week by an MPLA delegation. By the end of September a UNITA delegation was in Lagos. All were received in the first instance by senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs. Later they met other top government functionaries. As a result of the unrelenting pressure from the three major liberation movements, there emerged among Nigerian officials, some informal lobby groups for each liberation movement.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile summary records of the discussions with representatives of the Angolan liberation movements had been passed to the Head of State's office.

As the pressure continued to mount, the Head of State-in-Council asked the Minister of External Affairs, Joe Garba, to submit to the Council a comprehensive brief on the situation in Angola. The Ministry's submission is still classified but it is said to have summarised the background of the Angolan crisis, and drew attention to the strengths and positions of the Liberation Movements, the efforts by OAU and Nigeria to bring the factions together to form a government of national unity, and the involvement of foreign powers like the USSR, USA, the Peoples Republic of

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42. Interview.

China, South Africa, Zaire etc., which it said helped to undermine OAU efforts to find a compromise solution in Angola. The Ministry further drew the attention of the Council to the fact that the previous administration (headed by Gowon) gave its full support to OAU efforts to bring about a government of national unity. The Ministry's paper formed the basis of Council deliberation on the issue. This was so because (as already stated) most members of the Supreme Military Council were new and had limited knowledge and experience of international politics and foreign policy. Characteristically, the options were laid open for the government to choose.<sup>43</sup> These include the choice (1) to try to bring together the major movements to form a government of national unity, in accordance with the proposal of the OAU; (2) to support one of the movements to take effective control of the situation in Angola and then call for reconciliation later; (3) to withhold recognition in the meantime. The Ministry's paper also highlighted some possible implications of each option and the likely remedies.

The new government was determined to take a different posture from its predecessor. It therefore needed further elaboration on the implications of other available options. Every bit of information on the issue at the time was valuable to the Supreme Military Council. To be sure of choosing the right options, the military government co-opted some intellectuals (see footnote 27) to be informal advisers on foreign policy matters. The role of the Advisers in the decision to recognise MPLA cannot be easily estimated. It is understood that they advised, among other things, against the

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43. Interview.

option of withholding recognition. The government was therefore left with the choice of supporting one of the movements. The difficult decision then was to determine which of the movements to support. There was a consensus (based on the various papers submitted) that support should be given not to a puppet or neo-colonialist agent but to the identified nationalist who would be supportive of the struggle to liberate the remaining dependent territories in Southern Africa. Given that there were already indications, in the submissions of both the Ministry of External Affairs and the Cabinet Office, of alignment of the movements in Angola with external forces, the decision could have been easy.

However, before it reached a final decision the Federal Military Government went further to send special fact-finding missions to Angola, one shortly before and the other immediately after the country's independence.<sup>44</sup> The two delegations comprised of military officers. The reports of the two missions were in favour of the MPLA. Both confirmed among other things that the other liberation movements - FNLA and UNITA - had links with the apartheid government of South Africa which provided them with military assistance and had also invaded parts of Angola in a bid to oust the MPLA government. Finally, based on these revelations, the SMC disqualified FNLA and UNITA, and having taken into consideration other factors discussed above, upheld MPLA as the only nationalist movement in Angola that could live up to the expectations of Africa in the ongoing struggle against colonialism, apartheid and racism.

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44. Sotunmbi, Abiodun O., op. cit., pp. 20-21.



Consequently, without regard to its ideological posture and without consideration of extracting any economic or strategic advantage, the Federal Military Government decided to recognise the MPLA Government of Angola on 25th November 1975. Being its first major foreign policy action, the government was conscious of the implications of according recognition to a government that could crumble soon after. It was therefore considered that if recognition is to be accorded to MPLA, it must be followed by material support, necessary to assist in the survival of that government. Thus the Supreme Military Council (SMC) decided to give maximum support financially, diplomatically and militarily to the new government of independent Angola. To determine how much financial assistance could possibly be given, the Ministry of Finance became directly involved in the process. Based essentially on the Ministry's briefs, the Council decided to give a sum of US \$20 million as an outright grant to the Angolan government.<sup>45</sup> In less than two weeks from the date of recognition, the cheque for this amount was handed to the Angolan Prime Minister, Lopo do Nascimento who was then on an official visit to Lagos.

On the nature of diplomatic support to be provided, the SMC decided to lobby other friendly countries and to use the next extraordinary summit conference of the OAU on liberation struggles in Africa to be held in Addis Ababa on January 11, 1976, as a forum to campaign for the recognition of the MPLA government by the OAU and all member countries. The possibility of giving military assistance to Angola was also considered by the Supreme Military Council. On this aspect, the Ministry of Defence and representatives

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45. Press Release, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 8 December 1975.

of the Armed Forces were directly involved in determining the possible scope of involvement, the logistics and cost-benefit effects etc. The SMC decided that Nigeria could provide some weapons and other military equipment. These were supplied to Angola.<sup>46</sup> From the analysis so far, it is clear that the process of the decision was influenced by various domestic and external factors and involved initiation of proposals, consideration and decision.

It is worthy of note that a month after Nigeria's recognition of MPLA government, certain events occurred that made the recognition appear unique and spectacular. As the African states were preparing for the OAU extra-ordinary summit, the United States and Soviet Union were also preparing along for the same summit. Before the opening of the summit both super powers had begun a flurry of diplomatic activities in Africa, aimed at sponsoring rival movements in Angola for recognition by African states. The Soviet government sent a note to the Chairman of the OAU, then President Idi Amin of Uganda, urging the Organisation's support for the MPLA in Angola.<sup>47</sup> The United States President, Gerald Ford, sent a similar note to the then Nigerian Head of State, the late General Murtala Muhammed, urging Nigeria to insist on withdrawal of Soviet and Cuban advisers as a pre-condition for the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola.<sup>48</sup> The United States supported FNLA - UNITA coalition at whose invitation

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46. The MPLA was reported to have renewed request for military aid but the Federal Military Government did not consider full military involvement to be necessary since the USSR was supplying the major weapons and the Cubans were already helping in the fighting.

47. Sotunmbi, Abiodun, op. cit., p. 15.

48. Muhammed, Murtala, A Time for Action, op. cit., p. 54.

the South African forces came into Angola.<sup>49</sup> Both Idi Amin and Murtala Muhammed denounced publicly the attempt by the super powers to influence unduly the OAU in the settlement of an African problem. The Nigerian Head of State unequivocally condemned "the unedifying role" of the United States in African liberation struggles, a cause which led to the American War of Independence. The Nigerian Head of State dismissed the US President's letter as "a most intolerable presumption and a flagrant insult on the intelligence of African rulers".<sup>50</sup> Urging other African leaders at the OAU summit to ignore President Ford's letter, General Muhammed argued that the United States had been collaborating with Portugal and South Africa to undermine the Angolan People's struggle for independence and that the US renewed interest in Angola was to instal a puppet regime there through which to manipulate the affairs of Africa. On the other hand, Murtala Muhammed stressed that the Soviets and Cubans in Angola who had been helping all along in the liberation struggle were genuine friends invited by patriotic forces to assist in maintaining national sovereignty and defending territorial integrity.<sup>51</sup>

It was Muhammed's undisguised expression of resentment for the US role in Africa which made that singular foreign policy action appear spectacular. In terms of substance, it is in line with Nigeria's African policy of opposition to colonialism and foreign intervention. Contrary, therefore, to the impression that Nigeria's recognition of the MPLA government was a unique change

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49. Legum, Colin, and Hodges, Tony, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

50. Muhammed, Murtala, A Time for Action, op. cit., p. 54.

51. Ibid., p. 55.



in foreign policy, it is upheld here that the decision was in conformity with already established African policy and followed almost the usual process of policy making in Nigeria as illustrated in the chart at the beginning of this chapter. However, if compared with the preceding case study on the decision to sell oil at concessionary prices to African countries in which the Federal Executive Council played a central role, it is a glaring fact that the Supreme Military Council (not the Federal Executive Council) had a central role in this case. Also in the oil case, the bureaucracy (i.e. the Ministries of Mines and Power, External Affairs and Finance) had a greater role than in the Angolan case in which it (the bureaucracy) had a lesser role. Also, in the latter, the Military was conspicuously involved through the SMC and the two separate fact-finding delegations to Angola. Finally, on the decision to recognise the MPLA, the process started from the top of the hierarchy (SMC) downwards to the Ministry and then upwards to SMC, which made the final decision.

#### NIGERIA'S PEACE KEEPING OPERATION IN CHAD REPUBLIC

The Federal Government of Nigeria has been in the forefront of the effort to restore peace to its crisis-ridden neighbour - Chad. As part of this effort Nigerian soldiers were sent into Chad for peace-keeping operations<sup>52</sup> between March 23 and June 4, 1979. The cost of this operation was substantial, given the logistic, financial and administrative requirements of the force. The exact amount is not yet known but was borne by the Nigerian government. Thus Nigeria's peace-keeping role in Chad made

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52. For explanation see Ogene, F.C. (Dr.), "Peace-keeping as conflict resolution by pacific settlement": A paper presented at a national seminar on Nigeria's peace-keeping in Africa. Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1981, p. 22.

enormous demands on the human and material resources of the country (Nigeria).

Apart from the costs, the decision was a swift change from diplomatic effort to peace-keeping activity. It signified greater involvement and responsibility of Nigeria in Chad. Moreover being a member of the OAU Standing Committee on Chad, when neither that Committee nor the OAU had resolved to send a peace-keeping force to Chad the decision of Nigeria to do so alone makes necessary a study of the decision process. What were the reasons for Nigeria to send a peace-keeping Mission to Chad? Who took the decision? These are the questions that we will try to answer below, starting with an examination of the general background of the conflict and the quest for resolution.

#### BACKGROUND EVENTS

Right from independence on August 11, 1960, the Republic of Chad has been going through a series of crippling political conflicts arising from internal ethnic and religious differences and aggravated by imperialist interventions. Many sister African countries, moved by the sad state of affairs, had on a bilateral basis sought ways and means of restoring peace and normalcy to Chad. In addition, the OAU Standing Committee consisting mainly of Chad's immediate neighbours (including Nigeria) had for quite some time been preoccupied with the problems in Chad. After each attempt at mediation, the crisis became exacerbated to the concern of many of Chad's neighbours and other African countries.

Chad is one of Nigeria's immediate neighbours, sharing a common border on the north-eastern part of Nigeria. Chad is a

land-locked country, larger in area than Nigeria, but with a scanty population of about 4.5 million, which is unevenly distributed and characterised by overlapping ethnic and religious cleavages. There are problems of unequal development between the Sudanic and Muslim peoples in the north and the more Negroid and Christian peoples in the south, giving rise to the animosity between them. The French colonial administration associated itself mainly with the Christian south at the expense of the Muslim north, with the result that the former became more developed than the latter. Chad's economic condition compounded its problems. Chad has a predominantly agricultural economy in which cattle and cotton are the major sources of foreign exchange. It is perhaps one of the poorest countries in Africa.

At independence in 1960, the country was under President N'Garta Francois Tombalbaye, of the Sara tribe of southern Chad and leader of the majority Chad Progressive Party (PPT),<sup>53</sup> allegedly helped to power by the former colonial master, France, for some political and economic concessions in Chad. Accordingly, President Tombalbaye granted France concessions to retain French military bases at Fort Lamy and Fort Foreau as well as for military operations in the north of Chad up to 1965, when as a result of differences between officials of France and Chad, French troops were withdrawn at the request of Chad.<sup>54</sup>

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53. In a bid to forge a cultural and political unification of the country by 1973, PPT was replaced by a new organisation - the National Movement for Cultural and Social Revolution (MNRCS). The attempt at cultural revolution accompanied, as in the case of Zaire, with the adoption of indigenous names for individuals and places.

54. Banks, Arthur S, Political Handbook of the World, MacGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1976, p. 65.



In that year (1965) there grew strong northern opposition to Tombalbaye's government leading to the formation in 1966 of the Chad National Liberation Front (FROLINAT), led by Dr. Abba Siddick. As a result of FROLINAT's relentless attempts to destool the Tombalbaye government, the President had to recall the French troops by 1968 to help suppress the rebellion. Later, Tombalbaye quarrelled with the French again. To compound the problems, Chad was besieged by the disastrous Sahelian drought of 1972 which resulted in a colossal loss of livestock and almost economic disaster. Meanwhile a faction of FROLINAT<sup>55</sup> led by Hissene Habre broke away in 1972 to launch its own campaign against the southern government. Tombalbaye's government found it difficult to withstand the mounting problems. By April 1975, the government was overthrown and an army general, Felix Malloum, took over the reins of power.

As a Christian from the south, he more or less inherited from his predecessor the problems of ethnic and religious antagonisms, especially between the north and south, in Chad as well as its economic crisis. Essentially, northern leaders were opposed to southern domination of the political system and use of this domination to ensure the distribution of the political "spoils" to their own favour.<sup>56</sup> Muslim political leaders in the north of Chad generally perceive southern administrators as representing

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55. By 1979 there were over half a dozen factions of FROLINAT, including (i) FROLINAT ORIGINAL led by Dr. Abba Siddick; (ii) FROLINAT REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL led by Mr. Acyl Ahmed; (iii) FROLINAT POPULAR FORCE OF LIBERATION led by Abba Seid; (iv) VOLCAN FIRST ARMY led by Abdoulaye Adoum Danaa; (v) FROLINAT FONDAMENTAL led by Mr. Hajaro Adim Al Sanusi; (vi) POPULAR ARMED FORCES (FAP) led by Goukouni Weddeye; (vii) the ARMED FORCES OF THE NORTH (FAN) led by Hissen Habre.

56. Vogt, M.A., "Chad in Inter-State African Politics" in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 7, nos. 1 and 2, 1981, p. 142.

an alien culture. In order to halt southern domination of the government, FROLINAT leaders started a campaign to win the support of various Arab governments especially in Tripoli, Algiers and Khartoum. Such support was readily available because of the perception of cultural and religious affinity between the peoples of northern Chad and the Arabised Berber countries of north Africa. An article in the Sunday Standard newspaper noted the assistance to FROLINAT by these Arab countries and highlighted that "In fact, the year 1978 witnessed the untiring efforts of Libya to unite the warring factions in FROLINAT so that they can present a formidable front against the government of General Malloum in N'Djamana".<sup>57</sup> The paper further pointed out that "In the Chad Republic, it is clear that a faction of the FROLINAT wants to seek a compromise with the central government led by Malloum. However, the radical wing backed principally by Libya does not favour a compromise and will rather see greater autonomy being given to this Moslem north".<sup>58</sup>

Thus, the new military government of General Felix Malloum had the two principal problems of how to conciliate the ethnic and religious antagonisms in Chad and how to improve the economy of the country. In setting up the provisional government, General Malloum called on all factions to participate in the government. When the government was set up, it comprised of equal numbers of the military and civilians and an equal number of Christians and Muslims. Yet some factions of FROLINAT rejected Malloum's call for reconciliation on the ground that Malloum's government was "a conservative military dictatorship with no ideological direction."<sup>59</sup>

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57. Sunday Standard, 18 March 1979, p. 4.

58. Ibid.

59. Vogt, M.A., op. cit, p. 144.

General Malloum's government, like its predecessor, remained weak and unable to establish effective control over a large part of the country. As a result, the government became desperate to reconcile with FROLINAT. Attempts at reconciliation were made under several auspices but failed owing to one reason or the other. By mid 1978 the then Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), who happened to be President El Numeiri of Sudan, a party to the conflict, made an attempt at reconciliation. He invited to Khartoum the Chadian General Malloum and a faction of FROLINAT under Hissen Habre for talks. At the end, it appeared each party took advantage of the other's peculiar circumstance (i.e. the central government's weakness and a rupture in relations between Habre and Goukhouni factions of FROLINAT) and an agreement was reached. Hissen Habre joined President Malloum's administration and was made the Prime Minister.<sup>60</sup> Consequently Habre came to N'Djamena (the capital) with his army to be merged with the national army. Soon, President Malloum and Prime Minister Habre began to disagree over several policy matters. There were accusations and counter-accusations like Habre accusing Malloum of interfering with his administrative duties and Malloum accusing Habre of dictatorship. The situation continued to deteriorate and the government became polarised between southerners loyal to Malloum and northerners loyal to Habre. At the same time, there was a disintegration of the Chadian army along tribal lines. By early February 1979, events came to a halt and there was renewed fighting between Malloum forces and Habre forces. Evidently the Khartoum Agreement had failed. Goukhouni forces fighting from the Tibesti mountains were at this

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60. Daily Times, Wednesday, 21 February, 1979, p. 3.



time advancing southwards to N'Djamena.

Two reasons for the failure of the attempt by President Malloum and Prime Minister Habre, to achieve unity and stability through sharing power, have been put forward thus:- "First with President Felix Malloum and Prime Minister Hissen Habre being two strong-willed men, both with their own ideas of how Chad should be administered, a personality clash was bound to develop in what was really a government of compromise between two warring factions. The second factor is the presence of French troops on Chadian soil and Mr. Hissen Habre's strong and consistent objection to this".<sup>61</sup> In the fighting that ensued, this time on the streets of the Chadian capital N'Djamena, there were many casualties including a Nigerian diplomat who sustained bullet wounds. Several properties were damaged, including Nigeria's Chancery in N'Djamena.<sup>62</sup> Following the fighting, Nigerians in Chad Republic were evacuated. Many Chadians ran away from their country to become refugees in neighbouring countries. There were about eight thousand Chadian refugees in Nigeria. The implications of these on Nigeria are obvious.

On 18th February 1979, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria embarked on diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Chad. According to the New Nigerian newspaper, "Major-General Henry Adefope, External Affairs Commissioner, flew out of Murtala Muhammed Airport, Ikeja, yesterday on the order of the Head of State, Lt.-General Olusegun Obasanjo, to assess the situation and hold talks with leaders of the warring factions. ... Major-General Adefope's conciliation mission is to persuade the leaders

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61. Ibid.

62. Federal Ministry of Information, Government Press Release No. 263, Lagos, 19 February, 1979.

to attend a meeting with our Head of State in Lagos".<sup>63</sup> The newspaper indicated that "Our Head of State feels disturbed and sad to learn about the turn of events in Chad and wants to use his influence to bring about peace in the true African tradition".<sup>64</sup> The two parties accepted the invitation of the Nigerian Head of State and so attended the peace conference in Kano (March 10-14, 1979) usually referred to as "The First Kano Conference", the outcome of which was a peace treaty known as "The Kano Accord". Thus began a number of Nigerian efforts, including two peace-keeping operations by Nigerian soldiers, to achieve reconciliation and a return to normalcy in Chad Republic.

As will be noted below, the first of the peace-keeping operations in 1979 was exclusively under Nigerian auspices, while the second of 1982 was under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). This study is on the 1979 peace-keeping operation solely undertaken by Nigeria. Who took the decision to send Nigerian peace-keeping force to the Republic of Chad?

#### THE DECISION MAKERS

In the foregoing account, some Nigerian government officials were mentioned and these were the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Commissioner for External Affairs Major General Adefope and the Nigerian Embassy in N'Djamena, whose reports generated much sympathy. By the early morning of 11 February 1979, a message from the Nigerian Embassy in Chad was received in Lagos telling of renewed fighting in N'Djamena, the previous day, between forces loyal to President Malloum and those of Prime Minister Habre. The Embassy

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63. New Nigerian, Monday, 19 February 1979, p. 1.

64. Ibid.

was convinced that the six months "honeymoon" between Malloum and Habre was over. It sent in regular reports on the Chadian situation. One of the reports was on the shooting and subsequent hospitalisation of an official of the Nigerian Embassy. Others included requests by the warring factions for Nigeria's assistance. On this, it is learnt that the Embassy was quite persuasive in urging the Federal Government to mediate in the Chadian crisis.

The others involved at various stages in the decision process include the Chief of Staff of Supreme Headquarters, Major General Shehu Yar' Adua, who was the Chairman of the Chadian reconciliation conferences, the Chief of Staff of the Army Lt. General T.Y. Danjuma, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Commander of the Navy, the Federal Commissioner for Internal Affairs and the Inspector General of Police. As indicated in the two preceding case studies, we are not going to discuss the individual personalities, their background and character formation as factors influencing their role. Rather, their role in the decision will be viewed in the context of the institutions or organs of the government which they represented. These, therefore, include the Cabinet Office, the Supreme Military Council, the Federal Executive Council, the Military, the Ministries of Defence, External Affairs including the Embassy in N'Djamena, Internal Affairs including the Police, and Finance.

The general features and functions of these government organs have been discussed earlier in chapter seven. Although the Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs were not specifically mentioned, they are parts of the bureaucracy. The MOD has the primary role of collating and co-ordinating information for the making of defence policies. It also provides military logistics and civilian support staff of the military. Its role in the decision



to send Nigerian peace-keeping troops to Chad was therefore important. The same can be said of the Ministry of Finance because of the huge costs involved in maintaining the troops, the support staff, procurement of equipment, transport vehicles, and general administration, which costs were underwritten by Nigeria.

All these organs participated in one form or the other in the decision-process but the primary responsibility for the final decision rested with the Supreme Military Council (SMC) which statutorily had powers to control the armed forces of Nigeria including their deployment in and outside Nigeria for combat operations.<sup>65</sup> It also had powers over all the other decision-making bodies. Therefore, it was the SMC that could have made the final decision to send a Nigerian peace-keeping force to the Chad Republic.

#### FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED THE DECISION

There are many internal and external factors that influenced Nigeria's involvement in the search for peace in Chad Republic. The internal factors include (a) Nigerian national security considerations, (b) the economic implications of the influx of Chadian refugees, (c) altruism, and (d) public opinion. The external pressures were from Libya, Sudan, Algeria, France, the OAU and Chadian leaders, especially the then President, General Malloum.

#### Internal Factors.

The need to prevent the Chadian crisis from constituting a threat to the national security of Nigeria was perhaps a crucial

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65. (Basic Provisions) Decree establishing the Council in Official Gazette, No. 52, vol. 62; October 23, 1975, Part A, p. A.149.

factor. The Federal Government of Nigeria has been quite apprehensive of the spill-over effect if the crisis in Chad continues unabated. Such apprehension is because, as mentioned earlier, Nigeria has a common border on its north-eastern sector with Chad, through which effects of the conflict, if not the conflict itself, can be carried across to Nigeria. For instance, any of the warring factions can discreetly set up its base inside Nigerian territory at the border and if this is discovered the opponent may assume the connivance of the Nigerian government and therefore has the option to attack that part of Nigerian territory. Moreover, arms can also be smuggled through the common border, giving the impression, albeit erroneously, of Nigeria's aid to one of the factions. There is also the more serious danger if extra-African powers were to be directly involved militarily in the Chadian conflict. This will expose Nigeria to very close military surveillance, regular espionage activities and possible threat of attack by external forces.

Generally it is not in Nigeria's security interest to live with neighbours involved in long and protracted conflict or who are only puppets of other states and whose decisions may have a negative effect on Nigeria. Hence the Federal Government undertook to mediate and preserve peace in Chad.

The influx of Chadian refugees into Nigeria was another factor that influenced the more direct involvement of the Federal Government in the search for peace in Chad. The escalation of the conflict led many Chadians to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and continued escalation was to increase the number of such refugees, with obvious economic implications. Nigeria therefore wanted to halt

the escalation and to restore peace in that country. Moreover, there was a similar experience in 1974/75 when drought forced thousands of Chadians to flee to Nigeria, the social consequences of which were left for Nigeria.<sup>66</sup> During the Chadian civil war in early 1979 there were about eight thousand Chadian refugees in Nigeria. Most of them were employed by construction companies while the Bornu, Gongola and Kano state governments employed some of them as agricultural workers, teachers, doctors, technicians and engineers. An investigation carried out by the New Nigerian some months afterwards showed that about 60 per cent of the total labourers engaged by construction companies in Maiduguri were Chadians,<sup>67</sup> many of whom even today are not prepared to go back home because of the gloomy economic situation in that country. This is the situation the Federal Government was trying to prevent.

Altruistic considerations influenced to a significant extent Nigeria's decision to preserve peace in Chad Republic. The decision to mediate in the crisis, to invite the warring factions to Nigeria and keep them in hotels at Nigeria's expense, to provide conference facilities for the four conferences (two in Kano and two in Lagos), to send a Nigerian peace-keeping force into Chad, with all the costs borne by Nigeria can be best explained by no other factor than altruism. This is more so as Nigeria did not, like Libya, France and USA (to be explained below under 'external factors'), try to extract any economic, military or political concession from Chad as a pre-condition. Such enormous fraternal assistance epitomises a cardinal feature of altruism which is "being one's brother's keeper". Hence the Nigerian leader felt "disturbed and sad to

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66. See Sunday Observer, February 25, 1975, p. 5.

67. New Nigerian, 12 June 1981, p. 16.



learn about ... our African brothers killing themselves".<sup>68</sup>

(See chapter 5(i) for more discussion of altruism). General Obasanjo's expression of the desire "to bring about peace in the true African tradition" underlines the influence of altruism on this decision. The same factor perhaps influenced some traditional rulers who urged the Federal Government to mediate in the crisis. For instance in 1979, as already cited, the Shehu of Bornu called on the Federal Government to intensify efforts to bring about peace in Chad.

Public opinion in Nigeria, is another important factor of influence on decision-making. Given that public opinion is active in Nigeria, as argued in chapter 5, the government's peace-keeping function which is a form of military operation outside Nigeria, cannot escape the praise/condemnation of public opinion. Reviewing the input of public opinion in Nigeria's peace-keeping involvement in Chad, Oyovbaire observed that "there was little or no public awareness generated or made to generate"<sup>69</sup> because the military government "did not provide the necessary institutional context for articulation of public support as compared to the handsome context which the presidential party politics and government provides".<sup>70</sup> However, he noted that that the nature of peace-keeping is that "it is usually conceived, organised and executed in a cloud of secrecy by an elitist bureaucratic caucus in the highest echelons of government. Hence,

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68. New Nigeria, February 19, 1979, p. 1.

69. Oyovbaire (Dr.) S.E., "Public Support for Nigeria's Peace-Keeping Role" in Peacekeeping. A summary of papers presented at a National Seminar on Nigeria's Peacekeeping in Africa, by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1981, pp. 65-66.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

fundamentally peace-keeping defies the structures of public opinion".<sup>71</sup>

On the contrary, public opinion especially the press, made considerable effort to enlighten the people about the events in Chad Republic. The New Nigerian carried a number of articles and editorials on, for example, "THE ROOTS OF THE CHADIAN CRISIS". The Daily Times of February 28, 1979, wrote on "THE FEUD IN CHAD". The Daily Sketch of March 12, 1979, on its front page highlighted "CHADIAN CRISIS NEEDS AFRICAN SOLUTION". The Sunday Standard of March 18, 1979 drew attention to "THE CHADIAN IMBROGLIO". All these tried to bring to focus the history and general trend of the crisis in Chad. A number of other Nigerian newspapers were forthright in urging the Federal Government to play a more effective role in the search for peace in Chad. For example, The Daily Times wrote:

"From the point of view of our own security, Nigeria must continue to maintain an interest in Chad. Disturbances in Chad could, after all, easily overflow into our borders. ... We ought also to stress our disapproval of the presence of French soldiers on African soil, a presence repugnant to the sovereignty and independence of African nations".<sup>72</sup>

The Sunday Observer on "CHAD: A SERIOUS AFFAIR FOR NIGERIA" pointed out that:

"Nigeria's action so far on the Chadian issue has not gone far enough. The point is that the Republic of Chad is not just another country. It is a country in Nigeria's immediate north eastern sector. Therefore, our attitude to that country has to be more positive, more direct, more involving and more vocal".<sup>73</sup>

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71. Ibid.

72. Daily Times, Wednesday 21 February, 1979, p. 3.

73. Sunday Observer, 25th February 1979, p. 5.

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71. Ibid.

72. Daily Times, Wednesday 21 February, 1979, p. 3.

73. Sunday Observer, 25th February 1979, p. 5.



An article on the Chadian crisis by Anene in the same newspaper highlighted several courses of action feasible for Nigeria and said inter alia,

"In the sale and auctioning of Chad, Nigeria has a strong national interest to protect.  
... A much more positive intervention in Chad is what Nigeria needs now. Or else, the fire over our north-eastern border will engulf us all - all too soon".<sup>74</sup>

There were also some individuals especially from the Universities who wrote letters direct to the Federal Government urging that one form of action or the other be taken to de-escalate the crisis in Chad. Such letters are usually confidential and therefore not easily accessible. It is however understood that in one of such letters the attention of the Federal Government was drawn to the large number of foreign troops in Chad, aiding one faction or the other. In addition, it indicated a plan by the USA and France to intervene militarily in Chad as well as a similar Soviet and Libyan design. The writer cautioned that

"This state of affairs, if left unchecked, could make a Middle East of this region of Africa".<sup>75</sup>

These represent the type of pressures generated within Nigeria as a result of the escalation of the Chadian crisis in February 1979.

#### External Factors

The Federal Military Government of Nigeria was also under some external pressures to mediate in the Chadian crisis. These were:-  
Invitation from Chadian Leaders: According to Colonel Magoro, "the deployment of Nigerian troops to Chad was at the request of

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75. Ibid.

76. Interview.

the Chadian authorities, and on the appeal of the French President".<sup>77</sup> As a result of the renewed violence in February 1979, the Chadian President, General Malloum visited Nigeria essentially to solicit the assistance of the Federal Military Government to bring down the rebellion against his government in Chad. There had been requests for Nigeria's assistance by some factions of FROLINAT, notably the Popular Armed Forces (FAP) which later became the Army of National Liberation (ANL) led by Goukouni Weddeye. The Nigerian government's response is not known but it is likely to have consisted of the usual altruistic platitudes about peace through reconciliation. That is, it indicated a wish to mediate between the warring factions rather than support one faction against the other. As it became obvious then that no faction could win outright victory, the government of Malloum agreed to mediation by Nigeria.

French Intervention: As far as Nigeria is concerned, "France has always been part of the problem to be solved in Chad".<sup>78</sup> France has had its military presence in Chad since the latter's independence in 1960. For most of the time, France supported the central government of Chad. For instance, but for the intervention of French troops, Weddeye's forces would have captured N'Djamena in 1978. At other times, the French supported a faction of FROLINAT led by Habre against the central government. It was said that French arms were supplied through the Cameroun to Habre's forces.<sup>79</sup>

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77. Magoro, M. (Col.), "Nigeria's Peace-Keeping Role in Chad" in Peacekeeping, op. cit., p. 61. Colonel M. Magoro was the commander of the Nigerian peace-keeping force in Chad.

78. Nigerian Forum, vol. 1, No. 1, March 1981, p. 10. The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1981.

79. Ibid. Due in part to anti-Libyan crusade (as Weddeye is assisted by Libya), France and USA have increased their support for Habre since 1980. Yet by 1984 Hissen Habre alleged that the French are also supporting some elements in the south against his government.

It was therefore felt that France's attempt was to keep the conflict going at a level which would not pose any problems for France but which, at the same time, could be used as an excuse to permanently maintain French presence in Chad. The French game was understood in Nigeria and the government became interested in helping to find a solution to the crisis.

The 1979 crisis had a wider dimension. France therefore appealed to the Federal Military Government of Nigeria to try to mediate in the crisis in its neighbouring African country.

Three reasons could account for the French appeal. First, the management of the crisis was becoming too expensive and France did not want to commit any more of its resources than hitherto. Second, with the involvement of Libyan forces, France wanted to maintain good relations with Libya (especially for its oil, at a time when relations between France and Algeria were at a low ebb). Third, the French were determined to contain the growing American influence in Chad by nominating an African candidate to mediate. However, the extent to which French appeal influenced Nigeria's decision cannot be estimated.

Libyan Role: Libya has maintained a significant interest in Chad.

It had annexed a part of Chadian territory - the Aouzou strip - an area of 80,000 square kilometres where iron and uranium have been discovered. It claims the area became part of Libya before the Second World War, as a result of the Laval Treaty between Italy and France (former colonisers of Libya and Chad). Libya had for long assisted FROLINAT to fight against the central governments of both President Tombalbaye and General Felix Malloum. About 4,000 Libyan soldiers, ostensibly assisting FROLINAT, have been



occupying the northern Tibesti Region of Chad since 1976. There were also reports of Libyan attempts to induce FROLINAT leaders to accept a merger of Libya with Chad.<sup>80</sup> These gave the impression of a determination either to expand the Libyan Republic at the expense of the weak sub-Saharan African states or to instal a pro-Libyan regime in N'Djamena. While dismissing the merger plan as unrealistic, the Federal Government felt concerned at the possibility of a minority government and puppet of Libya being imposed on Chad.

The United States' influence: The United States' perception of the conflict in Chad has been a reflection of its characteristic global economic and ideological posture. First the US was attracted by the economic prospects of the discovery of iron and uranium in the Aouzou strip and petroleum deposits in the Lake Chad region. US companies have been prospecting for minerals in Chad since the mid-seventies, and by 1979, the US had spent about \$25 million in exploration which has not been entirely fruitless.<sup>81</sup> Another US company, Esso, has been given concessions to prospect for oil in the area around the Lake Chad. As a result the USA is interested in the type of government that emerges in Chad. Secondly, the ideological interpretation usually given to such conflicts was only being muted in intelligence circles by 1979. There was therefore anxiety in Nigeria about the crisis being given ideological tune. However, "with the advent of the Reagan Administration, Libya is being projected as a Soviet surrogate with boundless expansionist ambition in Africa and the Arab world which has to be fought at all levels and everywhere,

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80. By 1981, it was announced in Tripoli that Goukouni Weddeye, who was then on an official visit to Libya, had signed an agreement with the Libyan authorities aimed at merging Chad with Libya.

81. Sunday Standard, 18 March 1979, p. 4.

including Chad".<sup>82</sup> Hissen Habre who has, in recent years, been vocal and militant in his opposition to Libya's occupation of the Aouzou strip, has therefore become an ally of the United States. The US has continued to supply Habre with arms and ammunition as well as the surveillance service of two AWACS aircraft stationed in the Sudan. In addition, Zaire, a US ally, stepped in to supply 2,000 troops to Habre to help him guard N'Djamena and Israel sends weapons to Habre through Zaire. Thus the hitherto civil strife has gradually assumed an international dimension which Nigeria did not want in the region and sought to prevent.

Having now examined some of the internal and external influences on Nigeria's decision to mediate and preserve peace in Chad, there will follow below explanations of how the decision was made.

#### THE DECISION PROCESS

The decision to send Nigerian soldiers to Chad Republic for peace-keeping operations was a sequel to the agreement reached by the parties to the conflict in Chad during a reconciliation conference held at Bagauda Lake Hotel in Kano, Nigeria. The agreement is referred to as THE KANO ACCORD. To appreciate the process of the decision requires an understanding of the Accord reached by Chadian leaders themselves, their unanimous request for a neutral force to help preserve peace in Chad, and the response to the request.

As already noted, with the deepening of the Chadian crisis, there was an expressed belief by Nigerian leaders that the conflict is an

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82. Nigeria: bulletin on foreign affairs, vol. 11, no. 1, published by Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, January 1984, pp. 98-99.



"African problem which needs an African solution".<sup>83</sup> Therefore the Head of State, Lt. General Obasanjo invited all the warring factions to Nigeria in order "to help them mould themselves back into a formidable whole".<sup>84</sup> The Chadian President General Felix Malloum and leaders of the three major opposing factions accepted the invitation and came to Nigeria for mediation. The conference was held in Kano from 10th-14th March 1979 under the chairmanship of the Nigerian Chief of Staff of Supreme Headquarters, Major General Shehu Yar' Adua and was attended by representatives<sup>85</sup> from Cameroun, Niger, Libya and Sudan who witnessed the Agreement. The role of Nigeria at the conference was stated thus: "our neighbourly involvement and that of any other foreign or extraneous influences must be limited to bringing together the various pieces or factions and creating an atmosphere free from violence, intrigues and threats, so that they could frankly and sincerely talk over their problems, hopes and aspirations. We must not lose sight of the fact that in the final analysis, only the collective and brazen will of all the people of Chad can bring lasting peace to Chad".<sup>86</sup> This perhaps reflects the political impartiality of Nigeria's Chadian policy which in both conception and application was equally fair to all the parties concerned and was not aimed at extracting any economic or political concession from Chad. The Kano Accord therefore was

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83. Daily Sketch, 12 May 1979, p. 1.

84. Ibid.

85. These were Mr. Sadou Doudou, Minister of State in charge of the Armed Forces, the Republic of Cameroun; Dr. Ali Abdelsalaam Treiki, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Libya; Mr. Moumouni Djermakoye Adamou, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Niger; Mr. Izzeldin Hamid, Minister of State for Council of Ministers, Sudan; and Major-General Adefope, Commissioner for External Affairs, Nigeria.

86. Obasanjo, O (General); Opening address to the delegates for the conference on national reconciliation in Chad held in Kano-Nigeria, March 10, 1979. This was read on his behalf by the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major General Shehu Yar' Adua.



an agreement by the Chadian leaders themselves for the Chadians.

According to the Accord the Chadian leaders agreed (article 1:a) "To hereby proclaim an immediate ceasefire and to pledge ourselves to maintain the ceasefire throughout Chad" and (article 1:d) "To the establishment of an effective neutral force which shall be provided by one country, namely, Nigeria, the size of which force shall be determined by the Nigerian Government". The other highlights of the Accord include, the demilitarisation of N'Djamena and the withdrawal of troops to at least 100 kilometres outside the capital; the granting of amnesty to all political detainees/hostages, the dissolution of all existing political organisations including the presidency, the defence and security councils, the integration of a truly national army made up of the forces of all the Chadian factions who participated in the conference; the formation by all Chadian parties signatories to the accord of a transitional union government which will prepare a programme for the democratic election of a national government.<sup>87</sup> Article 9 of the Accord provided that the agreement shall come into effect in Chad on March 23, 1979, i.e. the following week.<sup>88</sup>

From the provisions of the Accord, it is clear that Chadian leaders demanded Nigerian soldiers for peace-keeping operations in Chad. They also demanded the Federal Military Government's response and action in less than one week so that the peace-keeping force would have been in Chad by the date the agreement was to come into effect. It therefore seems that the decision of the Federal

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87. See text of THE KANO ACCORD published in Lagos, March 1979; also Daily Times, 17th March 1979, p. 9.

88. Ibid.

Military Government was a hasty one.

As already noted, Nigeria's Commissioner for External Affairs Major-General Adefope was in attendance at the reconciliation conference and the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major General Yar' Adua was the Chairman. It is likely that before the Chadian proposal was adopted and incorporated in the Accord, the Nigerian representatives gave consent in principle pending the agreement of the Supreme Military Council and the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo. Both Yar' Adua and Adefope were members of the Supreme Military Council and the former had tremendous influence in government as the next in command to the Head of State. Moreover, the Head of State was kept informed daily of the proceedings at the conference. It is also likely that other members of the SMC were informed and there was extensive coverage of the conference by the media.

At the end of the reconciliation conference in Kano, a full report and copy of the Accord were submitted to the Supreme Military Council in Lagos by the Commissioner for External Affairs, while the Chief of Staff was in the chair as Vice-President of the Council. This does not mean that the provision in the Accord for a Nigerian peace-keeping force in Chad was accepted as a fait accompli. After the report, the Commissioner for External Affairs presented to the Council a formal proposal for the deployment of some Nigerian soldiers for peace-keeping operations in Chad during the period of the transitional union government there. There was debate and discussion on the proposal. It is understood that some members of the Council objected to the proposal for only Nigerian troops to be sent to Chad. They argued that troops from other Chadian

neighbours who participated in the conference should have been mentioned in that provision to work side by side with Nigerian soldiers.<sup>89</sup>

The other issues raised in the Council include the size and component of the force to be deployed, cost of their maintenance, the type of weapons to be provided for the force and other questions of military logistics. The SMC asked the Ministries of Defence, External Affairs and Finance to submit their views on the issues without delay. The Service Chiefs were also asked to consult representatives of the major military divisions on the possibility of the operation being undertaken and the basic requirements of the force. When the Council re-convened two days later, all the reports had been submitted and after a lengthy deliberation it agreed that Nigerian soldiers would be sent to Chad for peace-keeping.

Having noted the concern about non-inclusion in the accord of the armed forces of other neighbouring countries that participated in the conference, for the peace-keeping operation, the SMC upheld that (1) it is in the interest of Nigeria's national security (particularly in terms of minimising the spill-over effect) to maintain peace in Chad; (2) the presence of Nigerian peace-keeping force will reduce the chances of direct foreign military intervention in the region; (3) the preservation of peace on the continent (which Chad is a part) is an inextricable part of Nigeria's African policy; (4) the demand for peace-keeping operation is an outcome of the diplomatic effort already embarked upon by Nigeria and therefore should be seen as a challenge which the Federal Military Government has to face; (5) Nigeria's total armed forces of 173,000 is large

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89. Interview.



enough to perform the dual function of external peace-keeping and internal security.<sup>90</sup>

The Head of State-in-Council therefore advised the service chiefs to co-operate with the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major General Yar' Adua in setting up the peace-keeping force to be lifted to Chad by the Nigerian Air Force not later than March 22, 1979. The Head of State also advised the Ministries of Defence and Finance to make available the logistic support and funds respectively for the operation. The decisions were implemented with appreciable precision and by 21st March 1979 the Nigerian soldiers were in the Chadian capital N'Djamena to preserve peace. The peace-keeping force under the command of Colonel M. Magoro of the Nigeria Army remained in Chad until June 4, 1979 when it was recalled by the Federal Military Government of Nigeria.

While in Chad the functions of the force which were spelt out in the First Kano Accord, were described by Colonel Magoro as being (a) demilitarisation of N'Djamena and the surrounding district up to 100 Km; (b) control of the Chadian Air Force; (c) security of all important Chadian personalities; (d) enforcement of ceasefire; (e) ensuring free movement of civilian population throughout Chad; and (f) establishment of a buffer zone between the troops of the major adversaries.<sup>91</sup> The other peace-making functions, he said, were providing a forum for the parties to

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90. The military force is made of army 160,000, air force 7,000 and navy 6,000 - altogether the third largest force in Africa. That is, after Egypt with a total military force of 395,000 and Ethiopia with 221,600. Next to Nigeria are Morocco 98,000, Algeria 88,000 and Sudan 62,000. South Africa has 63,250. See Adekson, Bayo J., "Nigeria's Preparedness for Peacekeeping Role in Africa" in Peacekeeping. The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1981, p. 54.

91. Magoro, M. Col., "Nigeria's Peace-Keeping Role in Chad", lecture in Peacekeeping, op. cit., p. 62.

negotiate and discuss through daily conferences under the Nigerian Force Commander. It is learnt that General Forest, the French Force Commander, attended these conferences as an observer.<sup>92</sup> In the performance of these functions, the peace-keeping force encountered a number of problems. For example in the attempt to demilitarise N'Djamena "some of the guerilla fighters instead of moving out to 100 kilometres, simply removed the military outfit, changed to mufti and remained among the civilians, waiting for the least opportunity to spark".<sup>93</sup> Also while negotiations were still proceeding on the modality of a transitional government, three of the factions led by Goukouni Weddeye teamed up to form a "Transitional Union Government of Chad" at the exclusion of the other factions and contrary to the Kano Accord.

Consequently a second Kano Conference was convened almost two weeks afterwards. It hardly achieved anything because of the unwillingness of the Chadian leaders to come to a compromise. Meanwhile many other Chadian factions had come to accept the Kano Accord and to be signatories to it. In continuation of the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis, a third Chadian conference was held in Lagos, the Federal capital of Nigeria, from 25th-27th May, 1979, also under the chairmanship of the Nigerian Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major General Shehu Musa Yar' Adua. The participating countries were as in the first and second Kano conferences, including the Central African Republic (which attended

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92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

for the first time). Six of the twelve Chadian factions<sup>94</sup> attended the Lagos conference while the three factions that proclaimed the Transitional Union Government in N'Djamena did not attend on the excuse that they did not receive early notification about the conference.

Nevertheless the conference discussed the reports of the Conference chairman and the Monitoring Commission on the general events which had arisen since the second Kano conference. It condemned the formation of the Transitional Union Government in N'Djamena as a violation of the Kano Accord and appealed to the transitional government to dissolve itself forthwith and seek accommodation and co-operation with other signatories to the Kano Accord with a view to forming a legitimate Transitional National Union Government in Chad.<sup>95</sup> The conference also warned that if, by the 25th June, 1979, the various factions in Chad failed to comply with the Kano Accord, "the participating countries will no longer feel that they have any more moral obligation to continue their search for a just and lasting solution of the problem of Chad".<sup>96</sup> However, before that date the Nigerian peace-keeping

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94. These include (1) FROLINAT ORIGINAL led by Dr. Abba Sidick; (2) FROLINAT Revolutionary Democratic Council led by Acyl Ahmed; (3) FROLINAT Popular Force of Liberation led by Abba Seid; (4) VOLCAN First Army led by Abdoulaye Adoum Danaa, (5) FROLINAT Fondamental led by Mr. Hajaro Adim Al Sanusi. The six mediator-countries at the third Chadian conference in Lagos were Cameroun, Central African Empire, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan.

95. Federal Ministry of Information, Press Release, No. 823, Lagos, 28 May, 1979.

96. Ibid.



force had been withdrawn from Chad. The Conference also resolved to apprise member countries of the OAU through the Secretary General of the Organisation the main obstacles in the search for a solution to the Chadian crisis.

On receipt of the report, the OAU urged the participating countries to intensify their efforts at finding a solution to the crisis. As a result a fourth conference on Chad was held in Lagos from 10th-18th August 1979. A total of eleven Chadian factions participated as well as all the neighbouring countries involved in the previous conferences. At the end, another peace treaty was signed known as the "Lagos Accord". It provided among other things, for an interim government<sup>97</sup> and an OAU peace-keeping force, made up of troops from Benin, Congo Republic and Guinea. Nigeria was not included in the operation.<sup>98</sup> It is important to note that all the four conferences on Chad held in Nigeria were organised and financed completely by the Federal Government of Nigeria, without trying to extract any concession from Chad. This again underlines the altruistic nature of Nigeria's foreign policy.

In comparison with the two earlier case studies, the process here began from the top of the hierarchy, i.e. the Supreme Military Council and almost remained at that level until a final decision was made. This process is almost similar to the decision to recognise the MPLA Government of Angola but different from the decision to sell Nigeria's oil at concessionary prices for African countries.

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97. All factions elected Goukouni Weddeye as President of the interim government, Col. Kamougue was elected Vice-President and Hissen Habre as Defence Minister.

98. At the next OAU peace-keeping operation in Chad in 1982, Nigerian soldiers went there for the second time.

**PART V**

**THE PRACTICE OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

## CHAPTER 9

### FACTORS AFFECTING NIGERIA'S PRACTICE OF FOREIGN POLICY

In this chapter, we are going to examine a number of factors that affect Nigeria's practice of foreign policy. These can be classified into two groups. The first group consists of those factors that emanate from within Nigeria and the second are those that are outside Nigeria, all having influence on the practice of foreign policy and its impact.

#### Internal Factors

1. Economic factors: a variety of economic factors affect Nigeria's practice of foreign policy. We shall here discuss three of them.

##### (i) Constraints of a developing economy:

The foreign policy of Nigeria is influenced by its national economic circumstances. Nigeria is a developing country with a developing economy, characterised by a weak economic base, poor infra-structure and low economic capacity, which often exercise a negative influence on its foreign policy. Since national economic capacity enhances a country's international stature and influence, any state without a strong economic capacity is therefore unlikely to exert influence commensurate with its skill in state craft displayed on international issues. Thus, Nigeria's external image is circumscribed by its economic capacity. Although it possesses a variety of human, agricultural and mineral resources and could under wise management become economically developed, Nigeria is not at the moment a wealthy country in comparison with America or European countries with



which it interacts in the global system. Its rating by these countries will therefore be commensurate with its national economic capacity.

As a developing country, there are problems in transforming its rich potentials into a viable economy mode. As a result it suffers loss of substantial revenue annually and capital formation is difficult. For instance, Nigeria's total annual revenues of £N137,010,000 (1961), £N148,638,000 (1962), £N154,418,000 (1963), £N168,971,000 (1964) and £N192,188,000 (1965)<sup>1</sup> fell below the needs and requirements for effective sectoral development of the nation's economy. However, with the emergence of oil on a significant commercial quantity, there has been a substantial increase in the country's revenues since the seventies, e.g. ₦1,578.2 million (1973), ₦3,340.3 million (1974), ₦5,252.3 million (1975), ₦5,756.2 million (1976), ₦7,652.5 million (1977), ₦6,815.2 million (1978), ₦11,809.1 million (1979), ₦15,234.0 million (1980), ₦14,745.7 million (1981), ₦11,748.8 million (1982), ₦10,947.4 million (1983).<sup>2</sup> The increases in revenue have been from one source – petroleum. With the oil glut in 1982 and 1983, there was a major decline in Nigeria's revenue. Nigeria's heavy dependence on oil revenue is not a good sign of a healthy growth of the economy. Despite the increases in revenue, Nigeria's economy is still characterised by the low level of infra-structural development, poor communication network, slow pace of industrialisation, and inadequate social services. These show that the revenues are insufficient relative

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1. Central Bank of Nigeria, Economic and Financial Review, various issues, 1971, 1974 and 1981.

2. Ibid.

to the demands of the Nigerian economy. Thus the problem of low revenue has been a dilemma of every Nigerian government. It has militated against development plans and economic growth.

The implication is that Nigeria does not produce a wide range of industrial and commercial products to enable it to participate effectively in the international competition for scarce materials, markets and profitable trade. Such international economic competition helps to foster greater inter-relationships of states and form a vital part of a country's foreign policy. In fact economic contests and relationships generate motivation and incentive in the practice of foreign policy. Their absence makes the latter more routine particularly to countries not involved in military alliances and ideological rivalry. The constraints of Nigeria's developing economy have also made external investment difficult. Nigeria does not sponsor its citizens to do business abroad. It does not even encourage them to engage in meaningful external trade, except importation of finished consumer products like rice and canned foodstuffs.

In the sixties at least there were exports of some commercial crops like palm oil and kernels of about 600,000 tons, groundnuts 507,000 tons, cocoa 113,000 tons, cotton 71,000 tons, rubber 40,000 tons annually.<sup>3</sup> These fine crops accounted for 95 percent of agricultural exports. There were in addition mineral export products like tin, columbite and coal. The government might have been motivated by the search for markets, profitable trade and

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3. G.K. Helleiner, Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria (Homewood, In.: R.D. Irwin, 1966). Chap. 4 and Table IV-A-7 (pp. 502-3).

monitoring of market trends of these commodities. Such motivation and interest could account for the rapid growth of the foreign service and the expansion of Nigeria's external relations in the first Republic. But since the seventies, with petroleum as the major export product, Nigerian governments have been more concerned with the political aspect of external relations than the economic. Consequently, a vital and stimulating aspect of foreign policy practice involving international economic competition does not feature significantly in Nigeria's practice of foreign policy.

(ii) Limited funding of foreign service:

Closely related to low economic capacity is the problem of funding the conduct of foreign policy. The cost of maintaining foreign relations is exorbitant. Nigeria being a developing country has severely limited annual revenue (notwithstanding the oil boom since 1973) of which only a small fraction can be allocated for external affairs. The Federal Government's annual revenue in 1980 of N15,234.0 million (£12,180 million)\* the highest in twenty years, is almost equal to the British defence expenditure of £11,182 million for the same period. The problem of funding the foreign service would have limited the scope of expansion but Nigerians, with their gregarious nature, have persistently maintained their physical presence in 120 posts all over the world. The result is that most of the posts are poorly funded. This in turn limits foreign service staff in their coverage of events. For instance, in most Nigerian missions very little is provided for local transport and travel. The small amount provided is often only utilized by the Head of Mission. Other staff may not have the opportunity to know any other city than that in which the chancery

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\* The conversion is based on mid-1980 exchange rate of £.80 to N1.



is located. They will therefore depend on second-hand information about events in other parts of the host country. The point we are trying to make here is that financial constraints affect efficient conduct of foreign policy.

(iii) Lack of incentives:

Complaints of lack of incentives are common among staff of Nigerian foreign service who claim these have demoralising and frustrating effects on them.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the comparatively poor conditions of service, there is the absence of job-security, which they intimated was the major attraction in the first instance. The civil service (including the foreign service) was thought to be the most secure employment and this idea encouraged most Nigerians to join the service. In the process, many of them became dedicated and devoted to the service of their country and made tremendous personal sacrifices. The wave of changes in government brought about changes in the conditions of service and some public officers were rewarded for their service with dismissal or retirement without any previous notice or cause shown.

In 1975 after a coup that changed the leadership of the military government, the Ministry of External Affairs was purged of some of its hard-headed and experienced officers. In 1980, as a result of disagreement between the Minister of External Affairs and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, the latter with his outstanding experience in statesmanship, dynamism and devotion was relieved of his post with humiliation. Recently, in 1984, after another military coup, the Ministry of External Affairs had

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4. Interview with some foreign service officers of Nigeria.

another purge in which about 113 staff were either dismissed outright or retired,<sup>5</sup> again without any previous notification or cause shown. Some of those affected in the recent purge to whom I spoke lamented at their sudden dismissal and were conspicuously worried as they had no savings or investment at the time of dismissal. Their condition is aggravated by the absence in Nigeria of any unemployment benefit scheme or social security services.

Two immediate and direct effects of these unstable conditions are obvious. First the service is deprived of its staff whose experience over the years would be useful in the conduct of foreign policy; and secondly it has a discouraging effect on employees of the Foreign Service. Nigerian foreign service officers are continually haunted by the fear of sudden dismissal. This discourages them and sometimes diverts their attention from the actual practice of foreign policy to other endeavours in preparation for the 'rainy day'.

## 2. Political Factors

### (i) The federal structure:

In the first Republic, regionalism made a serious impact on Nigeria's foreign policy. At that time, both the Federal and Regional governments were involved, contrary to the provisions of the constitution, in the conduct of external relations. We have noted the differing positions of regional governments vis-a-vis the federal government on issues like Middle East crisis,

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5. Sunday New Nigerian, March 25, 1984, p. 7: "Ministry of External Affairs - Retirement Balance-Sheet".

a West African Union, military alignment etc. Regional governments' interference in external affairs made Nigeria appear to have contradictory foreign policy. It also created problems for the federal government which had to work hard to persuade the Regional governments to take their hands off foreign policy and to rely on the central government for the protection of their interests abroad. Incidentally, since the seventies regionalism has never existed as a factor of influence on Nigerian foreign policy. Rather the federal government has had the sole responsibility for the country's foreign policy, and Nigeria now speaks with "one voice" on international affairs.

Nevertheless, some of the attributes of the federal structure of Nigeria still affect policy formulation and execution. As earlier indicated, the federal arrangement itself is a recognition of the differences (socio-cultural and political) between the component states of Nigeria. And the differences have been institutionalised and perpetuated by the federal system of government and the constitution. Hence these differences constitute a constant feature of Nigerian government and politics as well as a source of distraction in policy formation. For example in deciding on a policy, public officials have of necessity to consider not only national needs and requirements but also the implications to certain regions or states in the federation, who may be disadvantaged because of their peculiar circumstances. The process of trying to harmonise or strike a balance between these differences are long and arduous. Thus Nigeria's diversity is a source of frictional drag on policy-making and execution in



the country. Foreign policy being an aspect of the national policy is similarly affected by the frictional drag or delay arising from the process of harmonising outstanding differences (in this case) of the federation.

The heterogeneity of the Nigerian federation gives rise to a series of other problems which affect foreign policy practice. There are instances of doubtful loyalty, unhealthy rivalry and sectionalism among government representatives. To illustrate the case of doubtful loyalty, we could perhaps recall the activities of some practitioners of Nigerian foreign policy during the civil war. There was the case of the Nigerian Ambassador to the Soviet Union who organised in his official residence a party to celebrate the birth of Biafra.<sup>6</sup> There were many other Nigerian diplomats of Eastern Nigerian origin who absconded from their posts to serve the interests of the secessionist Biafran government.

The effects are noticeable of sectionalism and unhealthy rivalry among the component groups competing for position and influence in the foreign service. For example the appointment of the Minister or the Permanent Secretary generates intense lobbying as different sections would want to see their own man occupy the post. In the event of a person from a rival section being appointed, some would gang up against the appointee,<sup>7</sup> thereby making more difficult the tasks of the office.

(ii) Influence of political parties:

Rivalry among Nigerian leaders and political parties also affect the practice of foreign policy. In the early years of

6. Stremmler, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1977, p. 80n.

7. See Sunday Times, November and December 1979, "Grapevine Column" on criticisms of the External Affairs Ministry. Sometimes official discussions and decisions on certain matters are leaked to the Press in order to embarrass the incumbent of the office.

independence, there were outstanding differences among leaders and parties as to what should be the substance and form of their country's foreign policy. Fortunately the major parties were able to come to agreement on a number of essential points. Their agreement was vital to the determination of the country's foreign policy. Although, thereafter, the politicians continued to criticise the foreign policy statements of their rivals, one could assume, according to Claude S. Philips, that there were no longer any basic differences among the major parties.<sup>8</sup> There were nevertheless differences in emphasis and style which perhaps were to produce different features of foreign policy practice. Based on the activities and statements of the parties and the official attitude of the leaders, it could be said for instance that the NCNC was to adopt the Western capitalist nations' style of conducting relations, which perhaps would have made Nigerian foreign policy substantially self-seeking, expedient and exploitative. On the other hand, the Action Group appeared to be in favour of a style more akin to that of the East European Communist states, which would have made Nigerian foreign policy self-seeking, radical and aggressive.

Then the NPC denounced the above two approaches in preference to the African nations' altruistic tradition and practice based on the philosophy of live-and-let-live, goodwill and humanitarianism. This would make (as it perhaps did) Nigerian foreign policy idealistic, pragmatic and egalitarian. The uniqueness of this practice is that unlike the others, it is more African and derives from the

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8. Claude S. Philips, Jr., The development of Nigerian Foreign Policy, North Western University Press, USA, 1964, p. 21.

traditional African social philosophy of altruism. These differences in style formed the basis of criticisms and opposition to the government on foreign policy. It was the ruling party's (NPC) preferred style and direction of foreign policy practice that prevailed and gave the country's foreign policy its peculiar characteristics. This is not to say that NPC formed Nigeria's foreign policy. At the risk of repetition, we recall here that decisions on the substantive issues of Nigerian foreign policy were arrived at through debates in parliament, meetings of political parties and the effort of NPC-NCNC coalition government. In effect, the theme and the standard structure and objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy were decided at independence through all-party consultations. Thereafter the style of practice of the country's foreign policy was to a great extent determined by the ruling party.

It is argued here that whatever style or method adopted by the federal government was with good intentions. The motive then was to establish Nigeria's image and presence in world affairs generally and in particular to assert a role of influence and authority in those matters that are of special interest to the country. But whether the chosen style and method had more than a proportionate effect, positively or negatively, on foreign policy output and impact are yet to be determined. The obvious thing is that the ruling party defined the method and direction of the country's foreign policy.

The influence of political parties did not exist during the thirteen years of military rule. In the second Republic of Nigeria, 1979-1983, political parties did not exert much



influence on the practice of foreign policy. This was partly because of their pre-occupation with domestic politics and partly because Nigeria's foreign policy had before then assumed definable characteristics.

(iii) Leadership role:

Presidential or Executive leadership is a very important factor in the conduct of foreign policy. Leadership's role in foreign policy varies with the type and quality of a President (Head of State or Government), for a President who possesses the expertise for leadership is more likely than a mediocre one to give the country's foreign policy the degree and kind of content and direction necessary to achieve its external objectives. We are not going to discuss here the typologies of Presidency, but to note that there are certain qualities necessary for the incumbent of the highest office of a state, be it Nigeria, United States or China. Such qualities make the President an asset to the country. According to Richard E. Neustadt's view which I think applies as well to Nigeria,

"The Presidency is not a place for amateurs.... The Presidency is a place for men of politics. But by no means is it a place for every politician. Besides, past office-holding is no guarantee that any man brings with him to the Presidency the degree and kind of feeling for direction that can help him once he gets there. And mere experience however relevant is no assurance that a President will find the confidence he needs just when he needs it most. Political experience must be combined with an insight into the sources (and essence) of Presidential power and authority.... The Presidency seems to be the province not of politicians as a class but of extra-ordinary politicians".<sup>9</sup>

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9. Neustadt, Richard E, Presidential Power - The Politics of Leadership from FDR to Carter, John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York, 1980, pp. 133-4. Expertise knowledge, foresight, experience and political will among other qualities combine to make up the personality of the extra-ordinary politician.

He insists that a President must possess the expertise for leadership to enable him to see beneath the surface if it is to help him weigh what is there. In Nigeria, the selection of a national leader is not based on any objective criteria or identifiable qualities of leadership but on some sentimental considerations such as one's ethnic origin and wealth or the ability to distribute money to the electorate. I think the views of Philip W. Quigg on the election of the Prime Minister in the first Republic, aptly describes the selection process then as well as in the second Republic of Nigeria. He wrote:

"In a land where political parties are divided along regional and tribal lines rather than upon issues, Sir Abubakar became Prime Minister not because he was the leading political figure at the time of independence in 1960, but by virtue of being the parliamentary leader of the largest party in the largest region with the largest tribes".<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, after President Shagari's visit to the United Kingdom in 1981, the magazine Root quoted The Times of London thus:

"President Shagari of Nigeria has lived up to Britain's assessment of him as a patient and pragmatic man who can take no for an answer. This is a good thing, because an absolute or qualified 'no' is what he has received from British leaders on every main political request of his visit".<sup>11</sup>

These views may not be absolute, but they most certainly represent impressions of some people about the quality of Nigerian leadership.

Under military regimes, the process of selecting a national leader is more crude. This is obvious as such regimes come to

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10. Quigg, Philip W., Africa - A Foreign Affairs Reader, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, for Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 1964, p. 302.

11. Root Magazine, 1981 Special Issue "to commemorate the state visit of His Excellency Alhaji Shagari President of Nigeria" published by Root Publishing Company Limited, London, 1981, p. 6.

power through violence. In the circumstances, it is difficult to estimate the degree of expertise which Nigeria's Heads of State and government bring with them to that office, hence "Presidential power" in policy making and implementation appear to be non-existent. In addition, having come to power through unpopular means, Nigeria's leaders devote much time to trying to secure their position and less time for vital national objectives. Therefore, leadership role and influence which ought to generate impetus and dynamism in the practice of foreign policy have almost always not been pronounced.

### 3. Organisational Factors

#### (i) Recruitment Procedure:

The method of recruitment into both the political administration and the foreign service are factors that affect the conduct of foreign policy. It is the method that defines conditions for recruitment and also helps determine who is recruited. And the person recruited decides or influences the way policy is practised. In Nigeria recruitment into the foreign service has been characterised by the principle of federal character and federal balance. This simply means that all states in the federation must be equitably represented in the federal service. The objective is to ensure that no one state or language group in the Federation could dominate the service at the expense of the other states.

In effect the original aim of the initiators of these ideas was to make it possible for people from the disadvantaged areas who meet given criteria for employment to be given priority consideration in the event of competition from the more developed



areas which already had many people employed in the federal service. In the course of time, however, the meaning changed to what is often referred to as "a quota system of representation" which makes it more or less automatic for some Nigerians to be appointed or promoted to certain posts irrespective of their experience and relative qualifications for the job. Thus, the ideas of federal character and federal balance, as applied to certain areas, have come to replace merit, with state representation as a yardstick for recruitment and placement in the national political process. This means that there is no standard criteria for every Nigerian to be recruited into the political process and the foreign service; rather different conditions for recruitment are applied to people from the less developed areas.

Perhaps the uniqueness of the Nigerian federation makes the formula tolerable in so far as it helps to maintain stability, foster exchange of ideas and harmony in the service, but not to the extent it affects efficiency and productivity. The application of this formula in some respects causes acrimony and low morale in the Nigerian foreign service. The implications are obvious. Staff of Nigeria's foreign ministry interviewed, cited cases of recruitment of persons relatively junior in rank and less experienced who are placed over other staff with similar or better credentials and longer experience.<sup>12</sup> There are also instances, they said, of persons converted from branch 'B' (i.e. the clerical and executive cadres) to branch 'A' (i.e. the diplomatic and policy cadre) who mainly perform routine

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12. Among the examples cited include the transfer and conversion of a stenographer to External Affairs officer, level 12. Reference was also made to recruitment into level 14 of a University lecturer with less than five years teaching experience, in preference to others with similar qualifications and longer experience in the foreign service who were one or two grades below.

administrative duties both at posts abroad and at headquarters. The selection of persons to convert is, understandably, influenced more by sentimental considerations than by the objective factors of need and ability to perform in branch A. In some cases, this amounts to 'putting a square peg in a round hole' which results in some complications and diminishing output.

(ii) Method of placement and posting of staff:

The posting and placement of staff to outposts for the implementation of policy are important aspects of the practice. In deciding where to deploy members of staff, usually done by a Committee, the principle of federal character and federal balance also applies. In a discussion with an Ambassador who was at one time chairman of the posting committee, I gathered that some members of the committee submitted lists of names of people to be posted to certain areas regarded as "soft-posts".<sup>13</sup> Each list normally consists of names of the committee member's favourites<sup>14</sup> and when their interests clash, then some bargaining will take place. If any area of the country is not effectively represented in the committee, it is likely that more people from that area in the foreign service will be posted to "hard-posts" during that period.

The absence of a systematic way of deployment creates other difficulties. As a result of the perennial criticisms of almost

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13. The terms "soft-post" and "hard-post" are commonly used by foreign service officers to describe the conditions of life in foreign countries as they perceive it.

14. It is common in Nigeria to have someone - a godfather - who would intervene on one's behalf to secure certain privileges. The more highly placed and influential a 'godfather' is, the privileges the godson enjoys. Without a 'godfather' one is bound to be an easy victim and may be unjustly dismissed or retired from a job, redeployed at short notice, denied promotion/increment, and in the business sphere one is not likely to secure a contract without 'somebody on the spot'.



every posting exercise, too much attention is devoted to it at the expense of job classification and description as well as proper orientation of staff toward their assignments. The consequences are that too many people are sometimes sent to a particular Mission<sup>15</sup> at much cost to the government. Some of the staff never know the type of assignment they would be doing and others spend a full tour without justifying their deployment and earning.

In some Missions the presence of many underemployed staff causes confusion as some of those dutifully engaged are discouraged by looking at their other colleagues. The Ministry of External Affairs makes it the responsibility of a Head of Mission to classify jobs at posts and to use his discretion to assign officers accordingly. While this appears good in principle, some Heads of Mission are political or military appointees with severely limited experience of the foreign service, and some others allow their emotions and sentiments to override their sense of duty, resulting in very little attention being given to job classifications, effective deployment and performance. These affect the conduct of foreign policy. In addition it is a problem for even a well-meaning Head of Mission to effect major changes in staff deployment at his mission. If a Head of Mission asks for a redeployment of under-employed staff, then he risks criticisms and condemnation from the apostles of federal character.

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15. Ref. U.K. diplomatic list. For example, in 1983 Nigeria had in the U.K. 107 staff in comparison with U.S.A. (75 ), USSR (42 ), China (46 ), Canada (54 ), Australia (39), India (68), N.Zealand (25). All these other countries could be said to have more advantages than Nigeria in their relations with Britain, viz. strategic/military interests, volume of investments, trade value, technical collaboration, cultural and racial affinity, ideological pursuits and in terms of preferences given to "most favoured nations".



Again, in some areas, assignments are given without regard to one's ability, specialisation or training. For example in 1980, there was a case of a misunderstanding between a Head of Department and a member of the policy staff under him. As a result the head of department sought to frustrate his subordinate by ordering the latter's redeployment out of the policy line into the executive line in a passport office in one of the remote states of Nigeria. To make matters worse for the subordinate officer, he was given four days within which to vacate his official residence in Lagos and to resume duty at the new post, despite reports of acute problems of accommodation and transport which the Ministry could have solved for him. It became obvious that the redeployment of the officer was a deliberate attempt at victimisation.<sup>16</sup> There are other similar cases. All these combine to affect output generally.

(iii) Communication gap:

Another factor that affects Nigeria's practice of foreign policy is the inadequate communication system between the governments and organisations in Nigeria and between them and Nigerian missions abroad. There is a noticeable gap in communication due partly to dependence on imported communication equipment/mechanisms and partly to the red-tape of the bureaucracy in a developing country. Available means of communication like the telephone and telex hardly function effectively in Nigeria because of irregular network and frequent cuts in supply of electricity. In places where these function, if any fault

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16. Interview. According to this source the affected officer protested. The sectional head (discipline) who examined the case told this researcher that his findings and recommendations were ignored, apparently because the 'big boss' insisted on having his way against the subordinate officer.

develops, it takes a long time to repair or replace, as the spare-parts have to be imported. As a result, there is no smooth communication channel between the Ministry of External Affairs and other agencies of government, whose input into policy making and execution are desirable. This is worsened by the 'snail-speed' at which Nigeria's Posts and Telecommunication deliver letters. Again, satellite communication is not yet established in Nigeria.

The paucity of communication between the governments of the federation and Nigerian Missions abroad could be illustrated by the cases in which some states send out information two or three weeks in advance to alert a Nigerian Embassy about a visit to its host country by the state's delegation but only to note that the message never reached the Embassy or High Commission by the time the delegation arrived there. Similarly, when Nigerian missions or delegations abroad are confronted with matters requiring information or clarification from any of the states in the federation, they often do not attend to such matters because they cannot immediately communicate with the state by telephone or telex. The only alternative will be by letter through a chain of bureaucracy which will only produce a reply months after the question was first raised. Briefly put, the problem of communication in Nigeria militates against effective co-ordination and practice of foreign policy.

(iv) Limited external information and propaganda programmes:

Information and propaganda are notable psychological instruments of policy employed by governments for the furtherance of (their) national interests and objectives. Incidentally, the Nigerian

government has no effective external information programme or organised foreign propaganda to boost its activities in international affairs. The effort to practise external publicity has been riddled with problems since the early sixties. The problems have arisen from the conflict between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Information over which has the statutory responsibility for external information. Details of the conflict are contained elsewhere<sup>17</sup> and need not be repeated here, but the effect has continued to make difficult the development of a coherent programme of external publicity and propaganda to inform and influence public opinion abroad about Nigeria's interests and objectives.

The psychological instrument of statecraft is utilised most effectively by modern governments to highlight the attributes of their respective countries; to rationalise or play down its shortcomings and failures; and to sell at premium values the national ideas, philosophies, beliefs and aspirations.<sup>18</sup> Governments use propaganda to try to influence the public opinion in other states and to make others look at given world issues through their own eyes. Nigerian leaders reject propaganda in preference to "appeal to moral principles" as an instrument of statecraft. The implication is a loss of the impact which the former makes on behalf of the sponsoring state in international relations. Indeed, the major task

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17. Koroye, P.B., "The Role of the External Information and Cultural Department, being an address during an Induction Course for New Entrants to the Foreign Service, 1979. On the question of responsibility for external publicity, it can be observed, for example, that in a country like Britain, the external service of the BBC is controlled by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Its annual financial allocation is included in the vote of F.C.O.

18. Ibid.



of the psychological instrument is to inform and influence public opinion abroad so as to make the sponsoring country's policies acceptable to the statesmen of other nations. This is not to say, however, that propaganda is now a substitute for an intelligent and purposeful foreign policy. Rather, effective information and propaganda aids the conduct of foreign policy and can forestall the efforts of opposing forces to frustrate external policy objectives. The psychological instrument is more effectively employed when it is utilised in close conjunction with all the other instruments of foreign policy.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the relevance of information and propaganda in the practice of foreign policy could be illustrated by the information programmes of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. For instance the British Broadcasting Corporation External Service is essentially devoted to the propagation of faith in Britain, its aims and achievements. It endeavours to influence opinion by presentation of facts and views as seen by London. In addition to the routine programme, the British are also known to have employed covert propaganda. Activities along this line have included such procedures as the use of special news services, the operation of secret or clandestine radio stations, and the spreading of reports

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19. Padelford, Norman J. and Lincoln, George A, International Politics: Foundations of International Relations, The Macmillan Company, 1954, p. 451. These services have continued to the present. In 1980-81 the total allocation of £1,452,861,650 was made to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Of this, £54,645,000 went to BBC external service "for external broadcasting and monitoring services". In the 1981-82 fiscal year, BBC external service got £61,898,000. See FCO, Supply Estimates 1980-81 and 1981-82, House of Commons Papers 470-II and 190-II.

and rumours".<sup>20</sup> The United States has a comprehensive information and cultural relations programme attuned to the nation's foreign policy. The programme of USIE referred to by President Truman as the "Campaign of Truth" was essentially "to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, and to correct misunderstandings about the United States abroad".<sup>21</sup>

Similarly the Soviet propaganda instruments are designed to present to persons in other countries the good features of the USSR, its aims and objectives, and to enlist their support of Moscow's policies and interests in the world. Soviet instruments of propaganda include the radio Moscow that beams its programmes in many languages to every corner of the world; the official news agency TASS, Soviet newspapers PRAVDA and IZVESTIA; and Soviet films. The skilful use of these propaganda instruments has contributed to the growth of communist parties, governments, agencies and organisations throughout the world.

The inference to be drawn from the above is that effective external information and propaganda enhance the practice of foreign policy. The absence or weakness of such psychological instruments has the opposite effect. Nigeria has neither an effective external information agency nor any organised propaganda programme. It

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20. Ibid., p. 453. A Cabinet committee determines the general lines of British information policies. Operating under the directives of this committee the Foreign Office guides most of the overseas publicity. Aside from its own News Department, it also exercises considerable influence over the nominally independent British Council and the overseas broadcasts of the BBC.
21. Ibid., p. 454. The US has over 200 Information Service Centres in the world. It also employs high-powered radio transmitters (The Voice of America); films and publications; American international schools; libraries, with American books, periodicals, government publications, and reference materials; the educational exchange of students, teachers, scientists; etc.

therefore relies, albeit too heavily, on its diplomatic channel of communication with foreign governments, while negating desirable support that could be afforded by effective external publicity and organised propaganda. This makes Nigeria's role and influence appear to be subdued or seen by some as not commensurate with its size and weight.

### External Factors

There are also some external factors that affect Nigeria's practice of foreign policy. These will be examined, like the internal factors, under the same headings - economic, political and organisational.

#### International economic conditions:

Recession and inflation that have characterised the world economy markedly since the Second World War have resulted in adjustment by states of their international economic policies to maximise the benefits of both bilateral and multilateral economic co-operations. The world economic condition appears to have been aggravated by the emergence of many new nations in the international system, resulting in substantial increases in demand for the scarce resources of the world but without a corresponding increase in output or productivity. This means increase in competition for the limited resources, of which states with more developed and streamlined economic infra-structures would have enormous advantages over the less developed areas.

The higher comparative economic advantage of the developed countries over the developing ones has risen to a level at which the latter countries appear to be dependent on the former ones.



This phenomenon explains the apparent over-dependence of Nigeria on trade with the industrialised nations. It is in the light of such competition too that one sees (a) the reluctance by some friendly countries to co-operate with Nigeria in its effort to industrialise; (b) the proliferation of unfair treaties and trade agreements that open the way to sedulous and uninhibited exploitation of Nigeria; (c) the activities of some multi-national corporations as agents of neo-colonialism and imperialism. These three factors (to be discussed briefly below) among others combine to retard Nigeria's economic growth and to give the country a marginal economic propensity in international bargaining. For example, despite the revenues from oil, Nigeria still borrows from external sources to finance major domestic projects. Such borrowing undermines the image of the country. In the recent (1982-85) attempt to borrow from the IMF, in which Nigeria is a shareholder, the conditions presented to Nigeria include what it must do with the loan if granted and how it has to govern/operate its economy in future. If Nigeria were to have a strong economic capacity for effective bargaining, like say the USA or UK, perhaps it would have had less stringent conditions imposed on a loan. On the other hand, if international economic institutions were to uphold respect for the sovereign states to determine their economic priorities, then there would be no need for such conditions that undermine the economy and sovereignty of a state.

- (i) Reluctance of industrialised countries to co-operate with Nigeria in the effort to industrialise:

Nigeria has emerged in world affairs at a critical juncture when it seems necessary to rely on imported technology if it is to

meet the demands of a contemporary world. Acquisition of the technology, it is believed, will boost its global image while failure to do so will have the opposite effect. Nigeria wants to industrialise but Nigerians and their Governments have gone about it perhaps in the wrong way by falling to the temptation to rely on importation of the know-how and at the same time adhering religiously to foreign patent devices which (are supposed to) make the acquisition of technology difficult. The government hopes, perhaps erroneously, that eventually good will may prevail and so makes adjustments here and there in its policy in order to nurture the hope. Nigeria's foreign policy therefore has almost always been tempered with moderation in the hope of continuing to elicit the good will and co-operation of its industrialised friends, most of whom are conservative and do not favour radical changes.

Nigeria's hope to secure the collaboration of the governments of some industrialised nations could be understood from the statement of Prime Minister Balewa:

"The reason why I personally want to see Nigeria taken into the Commonwealth is this: I know very well the immense opportunities and the great need for development in our country.... At present we are an under-developed country. In order to expand our economy we must seek investments from the richer and more developed countries, investments both of money and technical skill".<sup>22</sup>

The extent to which these hopes have been realised is open to assessment. We do know that Nigeria today imports even the basic food requirements of its people and its exports are 90 percent oil, unlike the period before and after independence when Nigeria was essentially an agricultural country and self-reliant in food

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22. Mr. Prime Minister; A selection of speeches made by Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1964, p. 37.

production. It then produced 80 percent of local food needs and its exports consisted of various cash crops and minerals.

It is apparent that Nigeria's effort to industrialise has produced the opposite effect, as it opened the gate for the flow into the country of finished industrial products from Europe and America. The effect being that instead of becoming industrialised, Nigeria has become a dumping ground for excess foodstuffs and goods from the industrialised countries. The result is the constant drain on the country's foreign reserves, despite the income from oil.

The reluctance of the industrialised countries to co-operate with Nigeria to industrialise could be illustrated with the country's forty years of effort to establish a steel industry - "conceived in the 1950s but only embarked upon at the end of the 1970s",<sup>23</sup> with completion to drag on up to 1995. Nigeria proposed to set up an iron and steel industry in the 1950s at Enugu near the coal fields. The first feasibility study was produced in 1957. It sought the co-operation of Western steel experts who cautioned that Nigeria could not achieve steel production "because of uncertainties about the quality of the ore deposits and the sources of the coking coal".<sup>24</sup> The experts enumerated the "horrific difficulties" to be encountered before such industry could begin production and estimated that Nigerian steel is likely for many years to be twice as expensive to produce as the international steel. The idea, therefore, was that "because... it is usually cheaper to import such goods than to produce them

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23. Financial Times, Monday, January 23, 1984, p. 12.

24. Financial Times, November 30, 1982, p. 29.



locally", the government should "put the entire programme in mothballs until Nigeria can really afford to embark upon it".<sup>25</sup>

However by 1967, Russian steel experts advised that steel production in Nigeria is possible and more economical. The Nigerian government thus awarded the contract to Soviet Technoexport to carry out the geological survey. Nigeria is today building an iron and steel industry at Ajaokuta with the collaboration of Soviet steel experts.

Other areas of the industry sector reveal similar reluctance to co-operate in developing the sector. Nigeria's industrial partners registered and licenced in Nigeria as industrial manufacturers have for many years remained sales-representatives of the large industrial complexes of Europe. Having been under several pressures to commence manufacturing their products in Nigeria or close down, they started only recently to open plants for local assembling of imported goods and equipment, rather than the actual designing and manufacturing of such industrial products and the processing of domestic raw materials. For example, in Nigeria there are several licensed commercial vehicle manufacturers like Ford Motors, Leyland at Ibadan, Steyr in Bauchi, Fiat in Kano, the Federated Motors Industries (Lagos), General Motors (Lagos), Anamco (Enugu), Nissan Patrol and Toyota Landcruiser (Lagos), etc. Some of these have been in Nigeria since independence

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25. Financial Times, January 23, 1984. See also survey articles captioned "Domestic steel industry faces formidable task" and "Dream that could turn into a nightmare", *ibid.*, November 30, 1982. In the later, the newspaper wondered "whether it is an act of faith or folly to be building steel works when the developed world is agonising over further cuts in capacity".

in 1960 and yet no motor vehicle is manufactured in Nigeria but hundreds are sold in the country by each company every year.

Fundamentally, the reluctance of foreign industrial partners to co-operate meaningfully has retarded industrial development and what exists now are "basically series of assembly shops for imported goods". According to the Financial Times,

"Nigeria's manufacturing sector is characterised by high import dependence, low value-added, poor linkages and high production costs". 26

The overall implications of all these include making Nigeria dependent on the industrialised nations, a drain on the country's foreign reserve, undermining of the country's international economic stature, and a weak bargaining position due in the main to the absence of trade-offs in diplomatic negotiations.

(ii) Activities of multinational corporations:

The activities of multi-national corporations also affect the practice of Nigeria's foreign policy. Some multi-national corporations operate as agents of colonialism and imperialism by undermining the efforts of a sovereign state. First, they engage in economic exploitation of their host country without making any significant investment to help sustain the economy. To illustrate the deliberate policy of exploitation, a personal observation is relevant. In 1979 a friend and I wanted to buy a car each and we were confronted with the decision to buy the cars in our host country and send them to Nigeria or to buy them in Nigeria, on our return, from the dealers there. This led us to a comparison of the prices of three different cars.

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26. Financial Times, November 30, 1982.

We obtained (through a rigorous process)<sup>27</sup> the comprehensive price list of these cars and compared the prices. It was discovered that quoted factory prices of the cars in two countries were substantially different from the quotations on similar cars in Nigeria. At the moment (October 1984) the price in Nigeria of say a Peugeot 504 GR in the showroom is N10,780 (£10,000) as against £5,000 in the UK and USA, and £5,500 in Portugal. Also the showroom price of a Volvo 244 DL in Nigeria is N18,000 (£17,000) as against £8,000 in UK, \$10,000 (£8,550) in USA and Escudos 1.4 million (£7,000) in Portugal. A number of commodities are sold to Nigerians at exorbitant prices, often at twice the price in a neighbouring African country and three times the price in the country of origin. The implications of this phenomenon on the balance of payments position of Nigeria are obvious.

Second, multi-national corporations also try to undermine the political activities and policies of their host countries with damaging implications on the global image. Two examples would make the point clearer. The Nigerian government's anti-apartheid policy is well known and it is involved in all United Nations' resolutions on sanctions against South Africa. In furtherance of this policy, the government called on all business entities operating in Nigeria to choose between continuing to do

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27. At our first request for price lists, the salesman asked and was told that we are Nigerians. He retorted by saying "We are not allowed to give out the price list" but that if we tell him how much we could afford, he would suggest the models within that price range and thereafter show us some of the models in the company's showroom with their prices displayed. Despite our insistence he refused to give out the price list. We had similar experiences in two other companies and in one, we were told frankly that it would be no use giving us the price list because the prices of the vehicles vary in some countries, of which Nigeria is one. In actual fact, there are artificially higher prices for some goods exported to Nigeria.



business in Nigeria and boycott apartheid South Africa or to boycott Nigeria and do business with South Africa. This was unequivocally stated by General Obasanjo at the World Conference for Action Against Apartheid held in Lagos in August 1977. He made it clear that Nigeria will not harbour multi-national companies that violate UN economic sanctions against South Africa. But some companies like Barclays Bank Limited and some oil companies continued to operate in both Nigeria and South Africa. By 1979 there was a publication in the Platts Oilgram News entitled 'South Africa reported in secret supply arrangement' with Nigeria. As a follow-up on 20 March, 1979, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation informed representatives of mass media that the apparent act of piracy was a meticulously planned high-powered propaganda campaign against Nigeria.<sup>28</sup> The news of Nigeria's crude oil to South Africa did not only elicit criticisms of the government at home and in some African countries, it also tended to make Nigeria's anti-apartheid policy a mere hypocrisy. The Federal Government quickly denounced attempts by agents to South Africa to pirate Nigeria's crude oil from her ports, while noting that "South Africa's oil game is aimed at falsifying Nigeria's international image".<sup>29</sup>

(iii) Unfair bilateral economic agreements:

A number of bilateral economic agreements entered into by Nigeria place serious limitations on the conduct of foreign policy and affect its impact. Some agreements are bogus and allow exploitation of one party by the other. Usually such

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28. Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Press Release, March 20, 1979.

29. Federal Ministry of Information, News Focus, No. 62, 23 May 1979. Also in "Nigeria: bulletin on foreign affairs", vol. 9, no. 5, May 1979, p. 3.

agreements lack adequate provision for remedying the excesses of a partner. Although we will not cite specific agreements, many Nigerians are worried that such agreements encourage the dumping of excess food and industrial goods into the country from abroad at very high prices. Along the streets of the major towns of Nigeria and in every shop where these goods are displayed for sale, one finds various commodities from many countries in which no Nigerian product is found in their markets.

The table overleaf of Nigeria's trade relations with ten countries in ten years (1971-80) is illustrative of the imbalance in Nigeria's external trade relations. It can be seen for example that in the period, Nigeria has imported several millions of Naira worth of goods from Japan every year over and above Japan's imports from Nigeria. With the exception of 1974, as the table shows, when the value of Japan's imports from Nigeria of N238.0 million was higher than the value of Nigeria's imports from Japan of N160.2 million, it is clear that Nigeria has sustained consecutively for the ten years huge deficits in its trade relations with Japan. Also in the trade relations between Nigeria and West Germany, the latter has maintained favourable trade relations consecutively for the ten years against Nigeria. Again the only exception was in 1974, when the value of West Germany's imports from Nigeria of N413.0 million was higher than Nigeria's imports from there of N264.7 million. Similarly China's trade relations with Nigeria has been in favour of China for the ten year period. The only reason for this state of relations is because Nigeria tries to implement its part of a trade agreement by importing from the other country in the agreement while that other country

NIGERIA'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH TEN COUNTRIES IN TEN YEARS (1971-1980)

COUNTRIES*	IMPORTS (C.I.F.) IN N. MILLION										PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL									
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980 <sup>E</sup>	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
CHINA	20.2	17.3	23.6	30.4	43.0	88.3	94.6	130.5	152.5	141.6	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.8	1.3	1.6	2.5	1.5
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	10.2	6.9	8.1	10.6	18.1	14.9	14.1	20.6	12.9	23.3	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
GERMANY (WESTERN)	131.4	134.7	181.5	264.7	543.5	826.7	1,117.6	1,253.3	1,003.3	1,487.1	12.2	13.6	14.8	15.3	14.6	16.1	15.7	15.4	16.3	15.8
HUNGARY	1.2	1.2	1.1	2.5	3.2	5.6	11.3	17.8	11.8	13.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
IRISH REPUBLIC	x	x	4.2	3.9	10.2	14.6	24.1	24.4	22.6	28.2	x	x	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3
JAPAN	91.0	92.2	112.9	160.2	366.6	477.2	756.6	871.7	669.5	1,016.5	8.4	9.9	9.2	9.2	9.8	9.3	10.7	10.7	10.9	10.8
SPAIN	N	N	N	N	52.8	75.6	115.3	160.0	127.5	178.8	N	N	N	N	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.0	2.1	1.9
SWITZERLAND	N	N	N	N	84.1	84.7	129.0	166.5	129.0	75.3	N	N	N	N	2.3	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.1	0.8
U.K.	344.2	292.0	331.6	402.2	855.0	1,195.6	1,563.7	1,785.1	1,073.4	2,070.6	31.9	29.5	27.1	23.2	23.0	23.2	22.0	21.9	17.4	22.0
U.S.S.R.	11.6	3.5	5.7	14.9	15.0	10.2	16.3	20.2	13.6	21.8	1.1	0.4	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

\* Countries selected randomly and arranged alphabetically.

x negligible

N not available

<sup>E</sup> The figures for 1980 exclude N241.5 million of total oil-sector imports.

Sources: Nigeria: Review of External Trade, Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos, 1975, p. 24; and 1979, p. 25.



**NIGERIA'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH TEN COUNTRIES IN TEN YEARS (1971-1980)**

COUNTRIES*	EXPORTS (F.O.B.) IN N. MILLION										PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL									
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
CHINA	0.4	3.2	5.1	3.6	4.8	0.6	7.6	4.6	6.5	2.8	x	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	x	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.02
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	0.6	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.5	4.2	x	x	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	x	x	x	0.1	x	x	x
GERMANY (WESTERN)	70.6	66.1	80.8	413.0	334.5	444.7	456.8	595.0	827.2	986.7	5.5	4.7	3.6	7.2	6.8	6.6	6.0	9.4	8.0	7.0
HUNGARY	0.5	1.3	x	4.2	1.2	x	5.5	x	0.3	3.3	x	0.1	x	0.1	x	x	0.1	x	x	x
IRISH REPUBLIC	x	x	5.3	3.6	3.6	2.2	0.1	1.6	2.7	1.1	x	x	0.2	0.1	0.1	x	x	x	x	x
JAPAN	17.4	55.0	104.0	238.0	172.3	32.2	7.6	3.5	8.2	5.0	1.4	3.9	4.6	4.1	3.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.04
SPAIN	N	N	N	N	4.8	1.2	2.1	26.4	30.8	76.5	N	N	N	N	0.1	x	x	0.4	0.3	0.5
SWITZERLAND	N	N	N	N	29.6	10.4	2.7	24.6	47.6	x	N	N	N	N	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.5	x
U.K.	280.6	300.4	424.0	976.2	694.3	702.9	616.9	404.8	635.0	348.9	21.9	21.1	18.7	16.9	14.1	10.4	8.1	6.4	6.1	2.5
U.S.S.R.	34.9	18.9	23.0	59.5	74.8	22.4	x	x	0.8	x	2.7	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.5	0.3	x	x	x	x

\* Countries selected randomly and arranged alphabetically

x negligible

N not available

Sources: Nigeria: Review of External Trade, Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos, 1975, p. 24; and 1979, p. 25.

does not import from Nigeria. It is certainly not a question of the goods not being available but of the lack of demand for them. This means that existing trade agreements encourage a one-way traffic in which foreign goods are imported into Nigeria without the necessity of exporting Nigerian goods to foreign countries.

As a result of continuous dumping of all sorts of commodities, there begins a change in the taste and orientation of the consumers, i.e. Nigerians, who then tend to negate local products in preference to imported ones. This in turn discourages local production of both farm and industrial products. Dr. S.O. Olofin discussed the implications of what he aptly described as "ultra-imported-biased-taste in Nigeria's external trade relations".<sup>30</sup> He said that the country's trade arrangements have been characterised by "a pseudo-outward-looking policy in imports which is not matched by a corresponding outward-looking-policy with regard to exports". He argued that this has given rise to "an asymmetry in taste, in which efficiency and sophistication in consumption or demand for final product is emphasised, without a matching taste for efficiency and sophistication in production. This unhealthy asymmetry in taste, almost bordering on seeking to live beyond one's means, has led to a continuing and increasing dependence on the rest of the world, which is assumed to be always there to satisfy the country's taste for goodies, ranging

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30. Olofin, S.O., "Ultra-imported-biased-taste in Nigeria's external trade relations" in Akinyemi, A.B., Nigeria and the World - Readings in Nigerian Foreign Policy, University Press Limited, Ibadan in association with Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 32-44.

from canned beer to pre-packaged technologies, as long as there is the foreign exchange to import them. It has also led to an almost absurd equating of anything imported with 'superiority' and of anything domestically produced with 'inferiority'. Illustrations abound: in market women who prefer imported textiles to domestically produced textiles, in the government functionary led to believe not only that foreign 'experts' possess all the answers but that they must be preferred to domestic 'experts'. The list can be multiplied.<sup>31</sup>

The point being made here is that Nigeria's trade agreements have contributed to the gradual shifting of the country's economic base from being agriculturally oriented to an import-dependent economy. This is because such agreements are ill-conceived and ill-drafted, to encourage unfair bilateral economic relations.

Instead of the agreements to encourage increase in productivity of certain products to meet external demands for them, they discourage productivity by encouraging reliance on imported goods. In some of the agreements the basic articles of trade of each party are listed at the annex, but the actual trade is in one direction, because while Nigeria demands the goods of say, country 'X' and imports them, country 'X' does not demand goods from Nigeria. Instead it may import such goods even at higher prices from another country where it hopes perhaps to gain some political advantages. The obvious implication is the continuous unfavourable balance of trade and payments against Nigeria. Another flaw in Nigeria's bilateral trade agreement sustaining trade agreements is the absence of automatic

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31. Ibid., pp. 37-38.



adjustment clause providing that in the event of a party to the agreement sustaining trade deficit consecutively for three or four years, the value of all trade activities between them for the following year will be applied to obviate a definite percentage of the deficit. An agreement should also provide for monitoring and exchange of information on its implementation. Even where such clause is provided, some country's prefer to keep secret some information about their trading activities with Nigeria.

However, part of the problem is attributable to Nigerians. In negotiating such agreements, no proper preparation is made in advance and delegates are selected on the basis of federal character rather than professionalism and expertise on the subject. They therefore arrive at the conference ill-equipped. The result is that agreements are reached based substantially on the partner's draft proposal prepared to satisfy the sponsor's objective and invariably place the other party in a disadvantageous position. The consequence is that much of Nigeria's revenue is siphoned out leaving the country with a weak economic base. As we have argued, a sound economic base provides much of the desirable nourishment for foreign policy and without it, foreign policy practice is like a tree in the desert.

#### External Political Constraints

##### (i) Influence of super-powers:

The dominant role and influence of the super-powers in world politics seem to dwarf those of the lesser powers like

Nigeria. As a result of the overwhelming military and economic capacity of the super-powers, they have come to acquire the dominant position and influence in world affairs. Consequently both politicians and academics tend to see super-power behaviour as a model by which the policies and practices of other states could be measured. Even the pattern of international relations today is characterised by the degree of affinity of other states with either of the super-powers, hence nations align themselves in subordinate positions to the super-powers and world statesmen speak with pride of their close connection with Washington or Moscow. A diplomat in the Embassy of Czechoslovakia during a meeting spoke eloquently of the dignity of Soviet leadership of the Communist countries similar to a British (Conservative) Government's admiration of United States' leadership of NATO. Using the super-powers as models, creates difficulty in assessing and equating the performance of a country like Nigeria. Given its youthful economy and several political and social constraints, Nigeria's activities and performance in world affairs, no matter the accuracy and effect, are bound to be dwarfed by the overwhelming influence of the super-powers. Having a very effective instrument of propaganda, the super-power mobilizes it to her advantage while undermining the opposing views of a lesser power.

A way by which the super-powers influence the practice of Nigeria's foreign policy is through their unending search for allies, and the tendency to discriminate between allies and non-allies. They often lend their weight and influence in support of the allies at the expense of other countries. The countries that do not have close alliance with the super-powers are

generally not credited fully for their achievements in world affairs.<sup>32</sup> Non-aligned countries are usually in a more serious predicament for if the government shows greater inclination towards one super-power on any issue, that non-aligned government will be criticised and condemned by the other super-power and its allies. For example, at the beginning of 1976 when a Nigerian government policy came into conflict with that of the United States in Angola, the United States "tried its hand at destabilising propaganda by starting the rumour in intelligence circles that Nigerians had been paid off by Soviet gold."<sup>33</sup> And when the then Nigerian Head of State General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated the next month (February 1976), "rumours were rife in Nigeria that the United States might have been involved".<sup>34</sup> This partly accounts for the cautious approach in foreign policy of the Obasanjo administration.

Thirdly, the conflicting interest of the super-powers in Africa undermines the effectiveness of Nigeria's African policy. Nigerian leaders have been concerned about the dangers of importing super-power ideological rivalry into the continent and therefore have tried to keep such rivalry out of Africa. From the crisis in the Congo to those in the Horn of Africa, Chad, Western Sahara (SADR)

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32. Virtually all countries outside the two geo-political axis are grouped and disposed as the "under-developed" or "developing" or "third world" countries while all eastern and western countries are generally classed as "developed", even weak states like Portugal and Greece in the west and Czechoslovakia and Rumania in the east.

33. Akinyemi Bolaji, "Nigerian-American Relations Re-examined" in Oyediran, O (ed.), op. cit., p.105. He also noted that Jeremy Thorpe, then leader of the British Liberal Party, sponsored the rumour in British media circles about an African leader being paid off in Soviet gold for his recognition of the MPLA. Similarly, in Uganda as in Libya, former President Idi Amin and Colonel Gadaffi at one time enjoyed the support of the US and its allies but when their relationships with the USSR became more cordial, the two leaders became discredited as "dictators" by Western propaganda.

34. Ibid. See also Daily Times, February 18 and 20, 1976 and Daily Sketch, February 17, 1976.



and Southern Africa, the concern for likely misinterpretation of the issues by the super-powers as the guise for direct involvement, has always been a stumbling block to Nigeria's policy in these areas. Since in almost all these conflicts the super-powers have taken opposite sides, an indication of the likelihood of making Africa a theatre of war, Nigeria therefore becomes more conscious in its policy in order to prevent such from materialising. This consciousness makes Nigeria appear sometimes to be indecisive and non-specific in action.

(ii) The influence of Britain:

Nigeria's relations with the United Kingdom also affect its (the former's) conduct of foreign policy. Successive Nigerian governments repose much hope and confidence in the relations with Britain, leading to a somewhat excess reliance on the latter to provide a magic solution to all the former's problems. But in reality, Britain has no magic solution to Nigeria's problems - a factor that angers and frustrates many Nigerians. However, such reliance has some influence on the practice of foreign policy. To understand the basis of the reliance and the effect on the practice of foreign policy requires to examine Nigeria's colonial link and orientation as well as subsequent events in Nigerian-British relations.<sup>35</sup>

According to Moses Ihonde:

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35. See Umunna, Orjiako, "Anglo-Nigerian Relations: 1979-1981" in Nigerian Forum, vol. 1, no. 2, April 1981, pp. 49-56.

Britain is a major factor in Nigeria's foreign policy. It was Britain that fashioned our tripartite system, which in turn has determined the type of government, its composition and policy. In the first Republic, British colonial influence dictated the employment of Peter Stallard (a Briton) as Secretary to the Federal Government of independent Nigeria. He was at the same time the closest foreign policy adviser to the Prime Minister. Our first batch of foreign service officers, some of whom are still in the service, were trained in Britain or British embassies elsewhere. Hence our foreign policy practice acquired a conservative character and reflected a leaning towards old friends. <sup>36</sup>

Thus because most of Nigeria's policy makers were either trained in Britain or have had a long-standing relationship with that country, there developed an acceptance of British values, traditions, tastes and fashions. The colonial connection and orientation also brought about a change in the attitude of Nigerians towards Britain, for

"... the attentions, loyalties and hopes of its (Nigeria's) citizens gravitated towards London, and to visit the metropolis became a symbol of status and the ultimate aspiration of many of our countrymen. It is a very sad commentary on Nigeria's twenty years of independence that its citizens, especially university students, top civil servants and businessmen, recall with so much nostalgia the last time 'I spent my summer in London', or 'when I was in London'".<sup>37</sup>

The extent to which Nigeria relies on Britain and expects British co-operation has made the latter a factor in the former's external milieu. Some activities in Nigeria-British relations reinforce the preponderance of British influence on Nigeria's external policy. First is the ever-increasing number of Nigerians in the United Kingdom, from about 900 in 1960 to over

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36. Interview with Ihonde, Moses O, Nigeria's former Consul General in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

37. Umunna, Orjiako, op. cit., p. 49.



30,000 in 1979. Although by 1983 the number reduced, with a substantial drop in the Nigerian students' population to 6,000 (as against 21,000 Nigerian students in the USA during the period), in the first two decades of independence there were more Nigerians abroad in the United Kingdom than elsewhere. It is estimated that 200,000 Nigerians go in and out of Britain every year. Second, Nigeria's external reserves in convertible foreign currency were for many years the pound sterling.<sup>38</sup> Third, Nigeria's leaders, especially in the first Republic as during the Gowon administration and in the second Republic, have attached the greatest importance to relations with Britain as evidenced in their speeches, acquiescence with reports of continuous deficit in Nigeria's trade with Britain, the number and value of contracts awarded to British nationals in comparison with other countries, and above all, in the priority and unrivalled publicity given to their state visits to Britain.<sup>39</sup> Arguably, as a result of

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38. Isong, C (Dr.), "Nigeria's External Finance" in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. I, no. 1, July 1975, p. 50. The foreign reserve was later broadened to include the US dollar, and more recently small holdings of Deutsch marks, French francs, Canadian dollar, Japanese Yen, Dutch Guilder, Swiss francs and Belgian francs.
39. A number of Nigeria's state-visits to Britain are on record but the British monarch was last in Nigeria in 1966 and it is not known when a British Prime Minister visited Nigeria last. It is recalled that soon after Dimka's abortive coup in February 1976, his first place of call was to the British High Commission in Lagos to solicit co-operation and recognition from the UK government. In less than six months of coming into office, in March 1981, President Shagari went to Britain on a state visit. The Nigerian Tribune of March 17, 1981, commented on the visit thus: "We readily recognise the temptation of Alhaji Shagari to want to wine, dine and shake hands with the British monarch ... in his unhidden desperation for international recognition for his regime".



Nigeria's close relations with Britain, the British influence inevitably directed Nigeria's foreign policy orientation towards a pro-British flavour.

On the other hand, Nigeria's ruling elite, in the process, leaned too heavily and placed high hopes on relations with Britain. There was hope in 1960 that Britain would dissuade France from testing its atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert; there was hope that Britain would supply the arms needed to prosecute the Nigerian civil war; there has been hope that Britain would transfer a large part of the technology that Nigeria needs; there has been hope that Britain would support Nigeria to bring pressure on other imperialist countries to grant independence to all colonial peoples; it has been hoped that Britain would support Nigeria's anti-apartheid policy and therefore join hands in the fight against the apartheid regime in Namibia and South Africa. In other words, Nigeria has hoped that in the pursuit of its external objectives, it would secure the patronage and support of the old friend but British policy on most of the issues has been at the opposite end to that of Nigeria. Thus a Nigerian scholar observed that:

"... Nigeria's childlike trust and confidence in the United Kingdom has hardly ever been reciprocated by a parent-like awareness of concern for Nigeria's needs and interests".<sup>40</sup>

All these illustrate the point here that the United Kingdom is a major external factor which affects both the internal and external objectives of Nigeria.

In an article published in the New Nigerian on 6th August, 1970, the author lamented that the British government and the

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40. Umunna, Orjiako, "Anglo-Nigerian Relations", op. cit., p. 49.

other western leaders who have been massively arming South Africa know perfectly well that South Africa's military weapons are solely used against Africans inside and outside the republic. Also another writer,<sup>41</sup> pointing at "the fantastic arms build-up in South Africa actively aided by all the major western nations", drew attention to the British government's sale of £400,000 worth of Vauxhall military vehicles to South Africa in June 1965; the sale of eight Buccaneer bombers in October 1965 and the aborted sale of eighteen Beagle 206 aircraft to the South African air force in December 1967.<sup>42</sup> Early in 1970, there was the deal, between the British Atomic Energy Commission and the South African Atomic Energy Board, for the mining and processing of uranium, which will speed up South Africa's nuclear programme.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the Nigerian government is confronted with a real threat from the apartheid regime armed with effective weapons to strike at any part of Africa. At the Commonwealth conference in October 1985 in Bahamas, when Nigeria hoped that all member states would agree to economic sanctions against South Africa, Britain was the only country that opposed the resolution. In effect, British collaboration with South Africa undermines

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41. Yusufu Bala Usman, For the Liberation of Nigeria, New Beacon Books Ltd., London, 1979, p. 138.

42. The sale of the Beagle 206 aircraft was only stopped because of American pressure against the deal as the Beagle would compete with their own Cessna aircraft which they had been supplying to the South African air force through third parties.

43. Ibid.

Nigeria's African policy, especially the effort to liberate Africa from colonial and apartheid regimes.

(iii) The French influence in Africa:

The influence of France in Africa is another factor that affects Nigeria's foreign policy practice. Such French influence in recent years came through the Francophone countries, whose responses to events in Africa are sometimes at variance with Nigeria's African policy. We would also recall here the French government's decision to test its atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert in spite of protests from the government and people of Nigeria who were really very concerned that the test would cause a lot of harm to the people of Nigeria and Africa at large. When the test was conducted, in disregard of African protests, Nigeria was the only country (in Africa) that severed diplomatic relations with France in 1961 and banned French vessels from using Nigerian ports and airfields.<sup>44</sup> Contrary to expectations, all the other African countries succumbed to French influence.

There is the feeling that France has maintained its economic and political control of the independent French speaking African countries, through a co-ordinated imperialist strategy like the creation of the French Community, sponsorship of regional and sub-regional blocs of countries, e.g. 'Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest', 'Conseil de l'Entente', and 'Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine'.<sup>45</sup> To the extent French involvement

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44. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

45. Ashok, Kumar and Eghosa, Osagie, "Problems of the Economic Community of West African States" in Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World, op. cit., p. 46.



in these groupings reflect continued colonial control of those African countries, to that extent they are incompatible with the objectives of Nigeria's policy on decolonisation. Again, the extent to which the groups pose problems for political co-operation and economic integration of African states, like the initial opposition to the formation of ECOWAS, to that extent they undermine Nigeria's African policy. Since the presence of France in Africa is understandably to preserve its imperialist interests, therefore any African decision that detracts, as it ought to, from such imperialist objective, would likely elicit France's opposition and counter-pressure through its allies in Africa. In such a situation the conduct of a given policy on an African issue will proceed with caution, and sometimes delay to ward-off the undesirable implication of the opposition. The most outstanding of French influences in Africa is its increasing military presence. France has extensive military links with the independent French-speaking countries in Africa. It has defence agreements with 18 African countries<sup>46</sup> and a large number of French troops in the continent.<sup>47</sup> These are in contradiction of the principles of non-alignment, independence and security of Africa, to which Nigeria is committed. The presence of French troops undermine the role of African states in strengthening international peace and security and likely too, to negate the demand to keep Africa a nuclear-free zone.<sup>48</sup>

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46. Imobighe, T.A., "African States and Defence Agreement with Foreign Powers: The Negation of Non-Alignment" in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, vol. 7, nos. 1 and 2, 1981, p. 81.

47. Ibid., p. 88.

48. Ibid.; Ajala, A., "The Organisation of African Unity and Non-Alignment", p. 104.

France's military intervention in various conflicts in Africa undermines African and Nigeria's diplomatic efforts and peace initiatives. While Nigeria advocates peaceful settlement of disputes within or between African states, if necessary, through the machinery of the OAU, France on the other hand has a vested interest in ensuring that the government that assumes power in its former colonies would be supportive of French interests there.

There have been France's intervention in Cameroun in 1960, 1961 and 1983, Gabon in February 1964, in Mauritania against the Polisario Movement of Western Sahara, in the Central African Republic, in the Shaba Province of Zaire and a number of occasions in Chad. In most of these, France used force either to effect the removal of an un-cooperative regime and to instal a more accommodating one or to assist a pro-French regime that was faced with the threat of popular insurgency.<sup>49</sup> In all these cases of intervention, the French policy was in direct opposition to that of Nigeria. For example in Chad, according to Margaret Vogt, Nigeria's interest is to ensure that a stable government able to bring an end to the conflict is established in that country, and to minimise the spill-over effect on Nigeria of the influx of refugees from Chad,<sup>50</sup> but the French, she said, have a vested interest in ensuring that only the government that would accommodate French interests could assume power in Chad.<sup>51</sup> Given the situation, Nigeria

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49. Vogt, M.A., "Chad in Inter-State African Politics", *ibid* - Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, p. 141.

50. *Ibid*.

51. *Ibid*.

and France would clash over the choice of a viable regime to govern Chad. If one recalls that Nigeria had organised at much cost three conferences in Nigeria to reconcile the warring factions in Chad and that Nigeria had maintained a peace-keeping force there and after their withdrawal came the invading troops and subsequent French military involvement, then the concern will be understood about French interference in Africa and the challenge it poses to other sovereign states in that continent. In particular, the increasing influence and involvement of France in Africa are believed to influence the conduct of Nigeria's African policy.

### 3. Organisational Deficiency in the International System

Another set of factors that affect foreign policy practice by Nigeria and indeed all the new nations, derive from the difficulties of establishing a just and equitable world order. These include (a) the absence of a central authority to curb the excesses of states and to determine the parameters of good conduct by which the behaviour of states can be measured; (b) the ineffectiveness of existing international organisations to enforce international code of conduct, resolutions, and sanctions; (c) the weakness of existing international law.

The present world organisations are not intended to, nor could they conceivably, make binding decisions and legislations. They cannot either establish acceptable measures and standards for the control and determination of states' behaviour. As a result, the international system is replete with inequities



and imbalances which enable the older nations in the system to dominate privileged positions and seize important benefits of that system to the disadvantage of the new nations. The ongoing debate on the possibility of a new international economic order and the negotiations for concessionary trade terms between ACP and EEC countries, clearly illustrate the point. Furthermore, since there is no universal standard of right and wrong behaviour of a state, there exists a subjective assessment of foreign policy practices based on the power and influence of the sponsoring country. This presupposes that the foreign policy practice of a state is proportional to its perceived military and economic capacity. This type of assessment has degenerated to a point where the practices of the most powerful and richest states, whether imperialistic or not, justifiable or illegal, peaceful or in breach of the peace, are used as models of foreign policy practice. Under such conditions, a new nation without a counter-balancing power and influence would make less impact with even the best policy. This is the predicament of Nigeria.

As we have noted, Nigeria's foreign policy is altruistic and based on the philosophy of live-and-let-live, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, adherence to the cause of international peace and security, the entronement of freedom and democracy (legitimate government of the people) everywhere in place of colonialism and imperialism, the elimination of racism and apartheid so as to facilitate mutual respect for human dignity, and to encourage functional

co-operation of all states and peoples in the industrial, commercial and scientific spheres. By incorporating the United Nations principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, and by bringing morality to bear in its view of world politics, Nigeria could be said to have pursued ideal foreign policy. Yet it cannot be given any more credit because the international system reflects various attitudes, persuasions and value systems. For the same reasons, more credit may be given to states that violate the sovereign and territorial rights of others or to states that threaten international peace and security in pursuit of imperialist ambitions or ideological sphere. As a result of the complexity of the international system, therefore, the appreciation and assessment of Nigeria's practice of foreign policy is influenced by the differing persuasions and value systems of its observers as well as by the absence of a universal standard and a central authority to reward performance.

## CHAPTER 10

### THE PRACTICE OF FOREIGN POLICY (1960-1985)

In this chapter, we will try to review the general trend in Nigeria's practice of foreign policy, highlight possible changes in the perceptions of policy makers and the resultant changes in the pattern of relations as well as in the choice of strategy. In doing so, it is important to bear in mind that Nigerian foreign policy is characterised by altruism (see chapters 3 and 5). It is devoid of imperialist machinations and has as part of its objectives the realisation of a new international political and economic order<sup>1</sup> (see chapter 4). Given these factors, it will be argued that Nigeria's practice of foreign policy has enhanced its stature and made a considerable impact on the international system.

While domestic politics have been characterised by instability, crisis and violent changes in government, foreign policy in spite of its constraints has been characterised by consistency, steady growth, dynamism and purpose. Certain general facts bear evidence to this view. Within twenty five years of independence, Nigeria has made a significant impact in world affairs. It has friendly relations with almost every country, with the exception of South Africa. Nigeria at present (1985) has its diplomatic presence in about 120 countries, including concurrent accreditations. This rapid growth in external relations, is indicative of a high profile foreign policy. Nigeria has remained committed to the liberation of the remaining dependent territories and oppressed peoples in Africa and elsewhere in the world. It has stood firmly in

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1. The quest for a new political order begun many years ago is reflected in the effort to secure the freedom and independence of all colonized and oppressed peoples, to promote respect for the sovereignty of all states and for all human beings irrespective of race, colour or creed. The search for a new economic order started only in the 1970s.



the fight against colonialism, apartheid and racism. This is shown in its substantial contribution to the OAU Liberation Committee and solid support for the liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Zimbabwe, which has continued for Namibia and South Africa. Nigeria is a leading member of the non-aligned countries movement and an activist participant in almost all committees of the United Nations Organisation. It has insisted that reason and rationality should prevail over might and intrigue in conducting relations between nations.<sup>2</sup> Nigeria's performance in world affairs has distinguished it as a great country and a source of pride to its citizens and the world's new nations.

On the other hand, some scholars and observers of Nigerian foreign policy have not been very enthusiastic about the country's performance. While reflecting on the practice of foreign policy in the first twenty years of independence, Kirk-Greene and Rimmer described three phases of Nigeria's foreign policy as "the low-key conservative period of the 1960s, the bruised and withdrawn time during and after the civil war and the assertive and interventionist era since the mid 1970s".<sup>3</sup> One could add here the fourth period, according to one commentator, of a conservative and woolly foreign policy of the second republic.<sup>4</sup> Another scholar, Olatunde Ojo, wrote that Nigeria's external relations since 1960 have been characterised by two salient and apparently contradictory features,

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2. "Nigeria flatly contradicts modern history as received today and makes morals and religion in Europe and America largely hypocrisy", in W.E.B. Dubois; The World and Africa; Kraus Thomson Organisation Ltd., Millwood, New York, Reprint edition, 1976, p. 326.

3. Kirk-Greene, Anthony & Rimmer, Douglas, Nigeria Since 1970 - A Political and Economic Outline, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1981, p. 46.

4. West Africa, No. 3454 of 24 October, 1983, p. 2437.

notably "continuity and change".<sup>5</sup> He argued that "despite several changes in regime-leadership and regime-type ... there has been an amazing continuity in the substance of foreign policy". Although he continued, "most analysts find the performance of each succeeding regime to be so much more dynamic than its predecessor's as to constitute a new foreign policy", such dynamism, he argued, reflects mere changes in style.<sup>6</sup> Insisting that the pattern of relations and international interests have remained unchanged since independence in 1960, Dr. Ojo held that "fundamentally Nigeria's external relations have remained status quo in orientation" to the extent that "1984 is not so different from either 1974 or 1964".<sup>7</sup>

These views are noteworthy but undoubtedly are influenced by both the orientations of the scholars and the tendency to employ extraneous yardsticks (based perhaps on the US or USSR or the British) to measure the foreign policy practice of Nigeria. Incidentally, these countries respective cultural values and socio-economic and political circumstances are different from those of Nigeria. Their perception of events and objectives in foreign policy are different. Nigeria's problems are different. The demands of Nigerians on their government are also different and so is the type of support they give to their government. As such, the output has to be different. There is also the tendency

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5. Olatunde J.B. Ojo, "Nigeria" in Shaw, Timothy M. and Aluko, Olajide, The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy. Gower Publishing Company Limited, England, 1984, pp. 194-220.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

to describe governments, particularly African governments, and their external policies as being conservative or radical according to how close or far away their leadership is to the former colonial power or to either of the ideological blocs. This tendency is misleading.

A balanced view of Nigeria's foreign policy will take into consideration as already stated its altruistic culture, history and economy, the international political environment (see chapter 9, external factors affecting Nigeria's practice of foreign policy), the relative short period of Nigeria's emergence in the world scene, those events in which it has been involved since then and the intended objectives. Thus, contrary to the views of "radical pessimists" of the political economy school, Martin Lynn has maintained that "Nigeria in 1984 is a good deal more independent than in 1964. If the longer term perspective is taken ... Nigeria, in spite of all the limitations, is clearly moving towards becoming a major continental power".<sup>8</sup> Lynn in fact was in agreement with Andrew Young's judgement that "Nigeria is in important respects, Africa's most powerful nation".<sup>9</sup> We should accept that Nigeria's opinion is regularly sought and continues to count in African affairs - a measure of its importance. Furthermore there can be no doubt that its international standing within the United Nations, for instance, has gained in prominence as shown in its regular nomination to serve on important UN bodies; Nigeria was appointed chairman of the UN Conciliation Committee during the Congo crisis; Nigerian troops participated in UN Peacekeeping operations in the Congo, Middle East, Kashmir and Lebanon; Nigeria was elected a member of the UN

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8. Lynn, Martin, 'Oil and troubled lands' in Times Literary Supplement, July 20, 1984.

9. Ibid.



Decolonization Committee and the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid of which she has been chairman since 1972; others include UN Institute for Training and Research, International Law Commission, ECA, WHO, UN Development Programme, the UN Environment Programme, and the Commission on Human Rights etc. If we accept this to be a spectacular record of achievements for a young state whose highest ever national revenue in 1980 was only equal to the defence expenditure of Britain in that year (as indicated in chapter 9), then it is argued, contrary to the views of its critics cited above, that Nigeria's foreign policy has been of a high profile, progressive and purposeful.

Nigeria is one of the significant aid donors in the world. From independence to this date it has been giving aid to both African and other countries. Yet Nigeria is neither one of the world's richest countries nor politically a very big power involved in the struggle for ideological supremacy or hegemonist sphere. Nigeria is perhaps the only country in the world that gives aid without strings - a factor that helps to illustrate the altruistic (cultural and religious) content of Nigeria's foreign policy. Nigeria has implemented a number of aid programmes through bilateral arrangements and multilateral aid programmes such as the Commonwealth Development Programme, IBRD, UNDP, WHO, OAU, etc. In 1963, Nigeria with other independent African countries provided a sum of £1,000,000 to aid various national Liberation Movements in Africa.<sup>10</sup> After 1973, with the growth in national income, Nigeria's aid increased and has been largely administered through the African Development Bank (which it made the largest single contribution of N50 million or 13.4% of the total by 1975), the Nigerian Trust Fund (set up in February 1976 with an initial capital of N50 million replenished

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10. Philips, Claude S., The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy; Northwestern University Press, 1964, p. 97.

with the equal sum of N50 million in 1980), and the African Trust Fund. From all these sources, several countries in Africa have been given assistance for a variety of purposes. Nigeria has, in addition, given to the various Liberation Movements financial, military and material assistance estimated to be slightly above N60 million between 1975 and 1979.<sup>11</sup>

At the bilateral level,<sup>12</sup> Nigeria has offered significant bilateral aid to many countries including the Republic of Benin (1972), drought affected African countries (1972), Mozambique - FRELIMO (1972), Republic of Guinea (1973), Guinea Bissau-PAIGC (1973), Sudan (1973), Somalia (1974), Zambia (1974), Granada (1975), Angola (1975), Romania (1977), Zimbabwe (1980) etc.<sup>13</sup> The comprehensive list of recipients with actual figures of Nigeria's aid is not yet available for quantification as a percentage of the GNP. However it is likely that Nigeria is one of the few countries in the world that devotes up to one per cent of its GNP for assistance to poorer countries. As already stated, a distinguishing feature of Nigeria's foreign aid practice is that it is without strings - a unique departure from the prevailing practice of other aid donors. For instance the Nigerian government has been making substantial contributions to Liberation Movements in Africa without attempting to interfere with the future governments in the territories. Nigeria's generosity amidst its own difficulties may seem idiosyncratic to the capitalist with a primary desire to exploit the weakness of others in every relationship but to the altruist it is proper to do so. These different value systems are sometimes ignored by some critics. However, it is admissible that Nigeria is making definite

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11. Fafowura, O. (Dr.), formerly Deputy Director of African Affairs Department, Ministry of External Affairs, Lagos in a lecture during Induction course, 1980.

12. See also the sale of Nigeria's oil to African countries at concessionary prices in chapter 8 of this work.

13. For a list of some aid given by Nigeria between 1970 and 1979 see Tyoden G. Sonni, "Development Strategies and Foreign Policy in peripheral states: the Political Economy of Nigeria's external relations 1960-1979"; Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1980.



contributions to the world both by aiding the needy countries and by bringing humanism and morality to bear in world politics - thus making its foreign policy liberal and purposeful.

Changes in the pattern and perception of foreign policy

Six broad patterns of change are visible:

- (1) There has been a remarkable growth in Nigeria's external relations, which accounts for its enhanced stature as an international actor. This is shown by Nigeria's above-mentioned involvement in many international issues and its regular consultation on many African affairs.
- (2) There have been changes in the tempo of foreign policy, corresponding with changes in regime and regime-leadership. These changes have also corresponded with favourable changes in the economic circumstances of the country. The growth in revenue has made possible the country's increasing representation and involvement in many international issues. The fact that Nigeria is widely held by many writers and commentators (some of whom have been cited) as a very important (it has been said, leading country) in Africa, is indicative of the increasing role and prominence of Nigeria over the period.
- (3) There have also been changes in the direction of foreign policy especially under the military regimes. Since the seventies the direction of policy has been markedly towards Africa. There has been an increasing interest towards the East. Whereas in the first Republic of Nigeria, relations with the Communist countries could be said to have been on a very low-key, under the military regime, relations with the Communist countries grew significantly with prospects of being intensified, as a close study of Nigeria-Soviet relations will reveal.
- (4) There have been considerable changes in policy towards the West, evidenced by the series of rifts in relations due to differences on some political issues e.g. conflicting policy on South Africa.



(5) Closely related to the change in direction is the reinforcement of Nigeria's non-aligned status.

(6) There have been noticeable changes in the tactics and strategy of Nigeria's foreign policy. Whereas in the first Republic, Nigeria was more rhetorical and adopted a strategy of verbal condemnation of what it considered unjust, during the military regime some definitive political and economic actions were taken to defend the country's national interests. These include the initiative in the formation of ECDOWAS costing Nigeria a huge sum of money, the diplomatic battle against the United States over the Angolan independence as well as the use of "nationalisation" as an economic weapon against Britain over the independence of Zimbabwe.

However, one must admit also that Nigeria has made some obvious mistakes in the course of acquiring experience in foreign affairs. These include its initial (1960s) lukewarm attitude to Pan-African issues, rejection of radical approaches to regional integration, and the belief in a just world order in disregard of the dangers of the international environment and the political machinations of foreign powers.<sup>14</sup> Other mistakes include acceptance at face value of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and signing of it (1971), acceptance of the paternalistic concession of temporary seats in the UN

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14. Such belief is evident in the declaration of Nigeria's absolute commitment to the cause of world peace, the sovereign equality of states, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, peaceful settlement of disputes and the employment of rational diplomatic persuasion as a weapon to achieve these ends. See Mr. Prime Minister; A selection of speeches made by Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1964, pp. 50-57.

Security Council in place of Africa's permanent seat, and the unrealistic expectation from industrialised countries of a formal transfer of modern technology instead of harnessing indigenous manpower and technological skills as well as the adoption of patent laws that will suit its purpose. However the foreign policy of every country in the world today is replete with alternating successes and woeful reverses. The point here is that both have to be objectively balanced and analysed in an assessment of the general conduct of the country's external relations. It is indeed apparent that its foreign policy successes outstrip by far its reverses.

To appreciate further Nigeria's practice of foreign policy involves identifying changes in the policy makers' perception of the domestic and international environments and the resultant changes in the definition of policy objectives, the order of priorities and selection of strategic instruments. For example in the 1960s Nigerian policy makers' perception of the domestic political environment as a potential source of crisis influenced its attitude towards external affairs, hence according to Grady Nunn, it either remained aloof or adopted an essentially conciliatory position on a good many issues.<sup>15</sup> Indeed the government's rejection of radicalism and preference for gradual changes in the pattern of political and economic relations were in part dictated by the inherent problems of the Nigerian federation. Since 1966, that influence has reduced significantly resulting in a different perception and attitude to foreign policy. These are shown in the innovative actions of subsequent Nigerian governments in foreign affairs like increased interest in Pan-African issues (e.g. diplomatic initiatives to reconcile Ethiopia

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15. In Blitz, Franklin L. (ed.), The Politics and Administration of Nigerian Government. Sweet & Maxwell, London, 1965, pp. 163-4.



and Somalia, peace-keeping in Chad, and assistance to liberation movements) and active involvement in regional integration (e.g. the formation of ECOWAS).

Government's perception in the 1960s of the historical link with the United Kingdom and its (UK) likely role in Nigeria's future development led it to maintain a strong attachment to both London and the Commonwealth. The government then relied heavily on Britain, accepted British advice on many issues and even counter-manded decisions of the OAU Council of Ministers that African states should break diplomatic relations with Britain over Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. It repeated the same when African members of the Commonwealth decided to demonstrate their disenchantment with Britain over Rhodesia.<sup>16</sup> The idea then was to maintain close friendship with Britain in order to persuade it and other members of the Commonwealth to co-operate with Nigeria in the effort to industrialise and develop its economy.<sup>17</sup> From the mid-1960s this attitude changed. Britain became constantly accused of neocolonialist and exploitative activities in Nigeria as well as of supporting colonial and apartheid rule in Southern Africa. The Commonwealth also came to be viewed as a mere association of friendly countries for exchange of views on matters of mutual interest and a forum for mustering pressure on Britain to accept the obligation imposed on it by history to free the remaining dependent countries in Southern Africa from colonial and apartheid rule. This change in perception was reflected in

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16. Ofoegbu, Ray Mazi, and Ogbuagu, Chibuzo, S.A., "Towards a new philosophy of foreign policy for Nigeria" in Akinyemi, A.B. (ed.), Nigeria and the World: Readings in Nigerian Foreign Policy. Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, University Press Limited, Ibadan in association with Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 125.

17. Mr. Prime Minister, op. cit., pp. 36-39.



Sir Abubakar's colourful performance at the Commonwealth Conference of Heads of State in January 1966 in Lagos (the first of its kind to be held outside London) at which pressure was brought on South Africa to withdraw from the Association. This was followed by Gowon's similar performance at Singapore in 1971 and Ottawa in 1973 over Britain's sale of arms to Rhodesia. The strategic instrument on these occasions was purely diplomatic. Also at the Commonwealth Conference at Lusaka in 1979, Nigeria's Foreign Minister Adefope, in co-operation with other Commonwealth leaders, succeeded in urging the British government to work for majority rule in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The strategic instrument used by Nigeria in this case was the nationalisation of B.P. assets in Nigeria. These performances have reinforced Nigeria's consciousness of the Commonwealth as a worthwhile association of friendly countries.

The international community was perceived by Nigerian policy makers at independence as a bipolar system in which Nigeria must guard its newly won independence jealously while contributing to the relaxation of tension in the world by discharging her international obligations honestly. Upon admission to the United Nations on October 8, 1960, Nigeria declared its total support for the principles of the Charter and absolute commitment to the course of world peace. Relying on its size, population, strategic location, military and industrial potential as was the leadership's "moderate and responsible" position on many issues,<sup>18</sup>

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18. Blitz, Franklin L. (ed.), op. cit., p. 164.

it hoped to win for itself respect as a credible African power and a dependable force in international politics. The government had also hoped that through diplomatic persuasion and settlement of disputes by negotiation African countries under colonial rule would be granted independence. This hope faded with the intransigence of Portugal, South Africa and Ian Smith of Rhodesia, while the United Nation's action was limited to mere resolutions. Consequently the Federal Government reinforced Nigeria's African policy and directed it towards the annihilation of the anti-social forces - colonialism, apartheid and racism. The government came to accept liberation movements as legitimate representatives of colonized peoples and to support freedom fighters.

From 1971, Nigeria entered a new phase of belligerent diplomacy. This is manifested in its increased involvement in political groupings like the UN African Group, the Group of '77, the non-aligned Movement, the UN Council for Namibia and UN Special Committee Against Apartheid. Nigeria's speeches on colonialism, apartheid and the new international economic order have been more strident and militant.<sup>19</sup> It has been repeatedly asserted, for instance, that the existing international system is weakened by structures of exploitation and control consciously and actively maintained by the technologically advanced countries. Thus since the 1970s international

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19. See, for example, General Obasanjo's speech at the UN Special Conference for Action Against Apartheid, held in Lagos, August 1977.

politics has been dominated by attempts to redefine the patterns of economic and political relations between states. Emphasis is increasingly placed on the economic line between north and south rather than on the ideological line between east and west. This is a significant change in the substance of external policy.

Indeed, Nigerian policy makers have become more conscious of the dangers inherent in the unstable international system due particularly to persistent inequality of power and wealth. Consequently Nigeria's external interests have been redefined, with strategies reselected on a continuous basis and patterns of relations continually adjusted. These are reflected in for example the 1972 indigenisation of certain sectors of the economy,<sup>20</sup> and the effort towards regional economic integration (ECOWAS). Two recent events helped to sharpen the policy makers' consciousness. First the diplomatic confrontation between Nigeria and the US over the former's recognition

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20. See 'The Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree 1972'. It reserved exclusively for Nigerians certain retail trades, small scale enterprises and manufactures. In some cases it enables Nigerians to take over foreign enterprises or to acquire equity share therein, thereby promoting business partnerships to a greater degree than ever before. In 1977 Nigerian ownership in some industries was increased from 40% to 60%.



of the MPLA Government of Angola in 1975 (see chapter 8 (ii)).

Second, Nigeria's present economic crisis due to the rapid decline of its foreign reserves since the last quarter of 1976. The country's foreign reserves of N5.7 Billion in 1975 dropped to N3.7 billion by December 1976 and continued to fall throughout 1977.<sup>21</sup> By October 31, 1977, the Central Bank of Nigeria's statement indicated that Nigeria's reserves then stood at 2.6 billion naira and by 1st July 1978 this fell sharply to 1 billion naira. The Obasanjo government was forced to introduce a series of economic austerity measures like an embargo on import of many commodities and in June 1979 drastic reduction of staff in Nigeria's missions abroad, resulting in no significant increase in the level of reserves. However, with the increase in sales of oil between 1979 and 1980, Nigeria's reserves rose to N5.5 billion by December 1980. But by December 1983 the foreign reserves had fallen to only N885.2 million, just enough to pay for one month's import bill,<sup>22</sup> only to go up by the end of 1984 to about 1.5 billion Naira.

This unfortunate economic condition has been attributed in part to high costs of Nigeria's imports while the prices of its exports are artificially low, and to the increasing burden of servicing international loans.<sup>23</sup> Consequently its economic status is being eroded and the government forced to reassess its development plans and national priorities, leading to the policy makers' perception of the international environment as inhospitable to Nigeria's interests and progress. According to one:

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21. Nigeria: bulletin on foreign affairs, vol. 8, no. 9, September 1978. Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1978, p. 210.

22. Central Bank of Nigeria: Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1981-83.

23. By April 1984 when Nigeria's currency notes were changed, it was estimated that about N4 billion was circulating illegally in Europe (with N2.6 billion in UK alone) and N1.7 billion in neighbouring African countries. These were believed to constitute part of Nigeria's external debts, for which interest is demanded.

"The positive attribute of the present crisis, however, consists in the reactivation of our consciousness of the dangers of the international environment, and hence our redefinition of it. While we continue to maintain our traditional friendship with the West, we are now engaged in efforts to diversify our economic relations with the outside world".<sup>24</sup>

To further determine whether the changes in perception have given rise to corresponding changes in the direction of Nigeria's external relations, let us examine briefly (a) the pattern of its diplomatic relations and (b) its external economic activities.

#### Policy and Representation

Exchange of diplomatic missions is usually on reciprocal bases. The willingness to send and to receive such missions is a significant measure of foreign policy practice. The pattern of distribution of a country's diplomatic missions is an indicator of the direction of foreign policy. However, it can be argued that mere diplomatic presence in a country is no evidence of the importance of a relationship between two countries. This may be true of an imperialist foreign policy but not of the altruistic foreign policy which (as noted in chapter 3) values long term friendly relations more than short term expediency.

From independence, Nigeria's diplomatic relations grew rapidly, from six embryo-missions in 1960, to forty<sup>25</sup> in 1965 while it hosted

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24. Nigeria: bulletin on foreign affairs, vol. 8, no. 9; Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, September 1978, p. 211.

25. These were AFRICA: Abidjan, Accra, Addis Ababa, Bamako, Bathurst, Buea, Cairo, Conakry, Cotonou, Dakar, Dar-es-Salaam, Freetown, Fort Lamy, Kampala, Khartoum, Leopoldville, Lome, Lusaka, Monrovia, Nairobi, Naimy, Santa Isabel, Yaounde. ASIA: Jeddah, New Delhi, Karachi and Tokyo. EUROPE: London, Dublin, Brussels, Bonn, Rome, Moscow, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Geneva. NORTH AMERICA: Washington, New York (Consulate). SOUTH AMERICA: Nil. OCEANIA: Nil. OTHERS: UN Permanent Mission NY and EEC, Brussels.

fifty-six missions from other countries and organisations. By the end of 1979, the number of Nigeria's diplomatic missions abroad rose to seventy-eight and foreign missions in Nigeria increased to 124. At the end of Nigeria's second Republic (December 1983) there were 126 foreign missions in Nigeria while it had 90 abroad (excluding concurrent accreditations). The pattern of distribution of the missions over the period is shown in the tables below:

Table a

Nigeria's Diplomatic Relations by Continents as at December 1965

	Africa	Asia	Europe	N & Cent America	S.America	Oceania	Others	Total
Nigerian Missions Abroad	23	4	9 East 1 West 7* Neut 1	2	-	-	2	40
Foreign Missions in Nigeria	16	11	18 East 5 West 8 Neut 5	2	1	1	7	56

\* Three of the seven missions were in UK alone. See footnote 25.

Source: Nigeria Year Book 1965. A Daily Times publication, Lagos, 1965, pp. 239-255.



Table bNigeria's Diplomatic Relations as at December 1979

	Africa	Asia	Europe	N. & Cent America	S.America	Oceania	Others	Total
Nigerian Missions Abroad*	37	11	19 East 4 West 12 Neut 3	7	1	1	2	78
Foreign Missions in Nigeria	37	22	32 East 8 West 18 Neut 6	8	6	1	18	124

\* AFRICA: Abidjan, Accra, Addis-Ababa, Algiers, Bamako, Bangui, Banjul, Bissau, Brazaville, Buea, Cairo, Conakry, Cononou, Dakar, Dar-Es-Salaam, Douala, Freetown, Gaberone, Kampala, Khartoum, Kinshasa, Libreville, Lome, Luanda, Lusaka, Malabo, Maputo, Mogadishu, Monrovia, Nairobi, Ndjamena, Niamey, Nouakchott, Ouagadougou, Rabat, Tripoli, Yaunde.

ASIA: Ankara, Bagdad, Beirut, Djakarta, Kong Kong, Islamabad, Heddah, New Delhi, Pekin, Tehran, Tokyo.

EUROPE: Belgrade, Berne, Bonn, Brussels, Bucharest, Dublin, Edinburgh, Hamburg, Liverpool, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, The Hague, Vienna, Warsaw.

N. & CENTRAL AMERICA: Havanna, Kingston, New York (Consulate), Ottawa, Port of Spain, San Francisco, Washington DC.

SOUTH AMERICA: Brasillia.

OCEANIA: Canberra.

OTHERS: Permanent Mission - Geneva, Permanent Mission-New York,

Sources: (1) Directory of Nigerian Missions 1979.

(2) Federal Republic of Nigeria, Diplomatic and Consular List, Ministry of External Affairs, April 1980.

Table c

Nigeria's Diplomatic Relations as at December 1983

	Africa	Asia	Europe	N & Cent America	S. America	Oceania	Others	Total
Nigerian Missions Abroad	38	13	22 East 6 West 13 Neut 3	8	5	1	3	90
Foreign Missions in Nigeria	37	22	32 East 8 West 18 Neut 6	8	7	1	19	126
<p>Sources: (1) Directory of Nigerian Missions, 1983. Twelve new missions opened in 1980 were: Atlanta, Athens, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Jeddah (Consulate General), Manila, Mexico City, Prague, Rio de Janeiro, Harare (Salisbury), and a permanent delegation to UNESCO.</p> <p>(2) Federal Republic of Nigeria, Diplomatic and Consular List, Ministry of External Affairs, Lagos, September 1983.</p>								

Table d

A composite table of states represented abroad

	Africa	Asia	Europe	N. & Cent America	S. America	Oceania	Total
1965	22	4	7 East 1 West 5 Neut 1	1	-	-	34
1979	35	11	16 East 4 West 9 Neut 3	5	1	1	69
1983	36	12	19 East 6 West 10 Neut 3	5	4	1	77

Table eA composite table of states represented in Nigeria

	Africa	Asia	Europe	N. & Cent. America	S. America	Oceania	Total
1965	16	11	18 East 5 West 8 Neut 5	2	1	1	49
1979	34	18	25 East 8 West 12 Neut 5	7	6	1	91
1983	34	19	26 East 8 West 13 Neut 5	7	6	1	93

The distribution pattern shows that the largest number of Nigerian missions has been in Africa, perhaps an indication that every regime recognised the primary importance of Africa in Nigeria's foreign policy. It however reveals the absence of Nigeria's diplomatic missions yet in about a dozen African countries, despite the claims that Africa is the centre-piece of its foreign policy. Perhaps of more interest in determining the direction of policy is the distribution of missions between the rival ideological blocs. This shows that in aggregate terms there have been more Nigerian missions in the West than in the East but in percentage terms, Nigeria has had since the seventies, more missions in the eastern bloc countries than the West. For example, the percentage representation



of Nigeria in (eight) eastern bloc countries were 12.5% (1965), 50% (1979), and 75% (1983), and the representation of the eastern bloc countries in Nigeria were 62.5% (1965), 100% (1979) and 100% (1983). On the other hand, the representation of Nigeria in the (sixteen) western bloc countries were 31.2% (1965), 56.25% (1979) and 62.5% (1983), and percentage representation of western bloc countries in Nigeria were 50% (1965), 75% (1979), and 81.2% (1983) (see tables d and e). This means that there has been a significant growth in the relations between Nigeria and the Communist countries of eastern Europe, with the implication of enhancing Nigeria's non-aligned status.

#### Trade and foreign policy practice

The pattern of external economic activities is another indicator of the direction of foreign policy. Economic activities may sometimes be determined by expediency and desire for profit, in which case the pattern will not be a measure of the level of importance attached to a given relationship. Yet such activities provide the additional tangible basis for quantification and classification of bilateral relations. Thus the tables below of Nigeria's external trade in the first Republic and under the first military regime will help to illustrate the pattern of economic relations.



Table 9Direction of External Trade (1977-1979)

Countries	IMPORTS (non oil sector)			EXPORTS (non-oil)		
	* Million (c.i.f.) and percentage			* Million (f.o.b.) and percentage		
	1977	1978	1979	1977	1978	1979
Africa	81.8 1.2%	80.7 1.0%	86.9 1.2%	17.4 3.1%	23.2 3.5%	25.0 3.7%
Asia	1,152.2 16.5%	1,423.4 17.6%	1,267.4 17.5%	17.4 3.1%	4.1 0.6%	6.0 0.9%
UK*	1,513.7 21.9%	1,780.5 22.0%	1,596.8 22.1%	171.3 30.7%	185.5 28.0%	186.3 27.8%
W.Europe	4,638.3 66.3%	5,348.7 66.1%	4,769.0 65.9%	440.3 78.9%	519.9 78.5%	521.3 77.8%
E.Europe	175.4 2.5%	160.9 2.0%	130.4 1.8%	18.2 3.3%	28.0 4.2%	27.3 4.1%
Americas	926.3 13.3%	1,072.0 13.2%	970.5 13.4%	60.9 10.9%	85.7 12.9%	87.7 13.1%
USA*	776.0 11.1%	885.7 10.9%	789.4 10.9%	60.7 10.9%	79.1 11.9%	81.6 12.2%
<p>* Figures for UK and US are included in those of W. Europe and Americas respectively.</p> <p>Source: Central Bank of Nigeria: Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1979, Lagos, pp. 74-75.</p>						

From the above, it is clear that Nigeria's external trade activities with Western Europe and the United States have been dominant relative to similar trade activities with any other group of countries. There has however been a noticeable increase in Nigeria's trade with the countries of Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia. The obvious explanation for the dominance of the West in Nigeria's economic relations is the long history of association between them from colonial times, resulting in the adoption of a capitalist mode



of life and development of tastes for western goods. However, under the military regime in Nigeria, political considerations more than economic ones influenced the country's external relations. There is some evidence for this in the siting of half of Nigeria's missions in countries without significant economic ties.

Britain has been the largest trading partner of Nigeria in terms of both imports and exports. Nigeria had more trade with Britain in the early 1960s than with all the EEC countries together. This changed from the mid-1970s and the EEC countries together began to take a larger share of Nigeria's trade. In terms of single country trade, the USA comes next to UK in trade relations with Nigeria. It can be observed that in the early 1960s Nigeria imported a sizeable amount of goods from Japan while the latter did not buy any significant amount of commodities from Nigeria. This trend continued throughout the 1970s as illustrated in chapter 9. Due to the one-sided pattern of trade, less importance has been attached to relations with Japan.

Other economic, cultural and social factors are important too in determining the direction of external policy. In the early 1960s, the Federal Government had a number of co-operation agreements with both the UK and USA. Throughout the sixties British companies invested more than others in Nigeria. The UK generally accounted for 51.5% in 1961 and 36.9% in 1978 of foreign investments.<sup>26</sup> Since the seventies, there have been wide fluctuations in net flow from the UK due to disinvestment. The USA and some Western countries have also made some investments in Nigeria. The involvement of the USSR

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26. Central Bank of Nigeria; Economic and Financial Review Vol. 18, No. 1, 1980, pp. 11-15, vol. 19, No. 2, December 1981, p. 14.

and other Communist countries in Nigeria's economic development really started only in the 1970s.<sup>27</sup> However, a Czechoslovak/Nigerian Export Company - CNEICO - has operated in Nigeria since 1946. That country's technical experts have been involved since 1978 in some development projects like the development of a water supply system in Kaduna and Katsina. The Soviet Union abrogated in 1964, during the first UNCTAD session, all customs tariffs on the exports of the developing countries,<sup>28</sup> thus providing favourable conditions for Nigerian exports to the USSR. Nigerian exporters have not yet taken advantage of the opportunity. The USSR has been involved in building heavy industry projects like the Iron and Steel complex at Ojaokuta, the metallurgical education complex and the Petroleum Institute. In comparing the number of investments in Nigeria by the two blocs, it has to be borne in mind that Communist countries denounce the capitalist mode of investment in developing countries as exploitative. The Communist states are involved through contracts in the establishment of industries and construction of various projects in the developing countries. It is symptomatic that no project of this nature is the property of the Communist state but all become the national property of the country where they have been built.<sup>29</sup> For example a Bulgarian firm was awarded a contract to build the National Arts Theatre at Igamu-Lagos. On

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27. However a Trade Agreement was signed between Nigeria and Czechoslovakia in 1962 and a cultural Agreement in September, 1978, Nigeria: bulletin on foreign affairs, vol. 8, no. 9, 1978, pp.6-7 and 104-105. Others include Nigeria/Rumania Air Services Agreement and Trade Agreement 1978; Nigeria/Rumania Economic Co-operation Agreement signed in 1978; Nigerian/Polish Trade Agreement 1961 and 1978; and Nigerian/Bulgarian Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation Agreement etc. Federal Ministry of Information Press Release No. 747, Lagos, June 1, 1978 and No. 787 of June 8, 1978.

28. Daily Sketch, Thursday, November 1, 1979, p. 5.

29. Ibid.



completion of the Theatre, it turned out to be the most modern monument of its type in tropical Africa. The work was completed in time to make the theatre available for the "Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture" – FESTAC – held in Lagos in 1977, to the great delight of the Federal Military Government. The Iron and Steel factory at Ojaokuta being built by the Soviets will also become Nigerian property on completion.

In terms of cultural contact, many Nigerians have been educated in the West especially in Britain and the USA. Many still are being educated there. However, since 1980, as a result of the increase in fees for foreign students, the number of Nigerian students in the UK has sharply fallen to about 6,000 as against 20,000 in the USA.<sup>30</sup> A number of Nigerians also have studied in the USSR and many are still studying there. Soviet scholarships are awarded annually to Nigerians to study in the USSR.<sup>31</sup> All the scholarships are allotted within the framework of economic assistance. Exchange visits between Nigerian officials and their counterparts in other countries have been on the increase. While it had been a routine for various Nigerian dignitaries to visit west European countries, unlike the east, it almost became a routine during the thirteen years of military rule for Nigerian state officials to visit east European countries. The most outstanding of these were the visits to Moscow by Generals Gowon (1974) and T.Y. Danjuma (1979). General Obasanjo also visited many east

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30. Estimate obtained from the Nigerian High Commission in London, 1984.

31. In 1978, for example, the USSR Ministry of Higher Education awarded 200 scholarships to Nigerians to study in higher and specialised educational establishments in the Soviet Union. This was 40 scholarships more than the stipulated quota for the year. The addition was in response to requests from Nigeria. Daily Times, August 1, 1978, p. 9.



European countries, e.g. Romania and Poland (1978).<sup>32</sup> State visits were made to Nigeria by the President of Poland in early 1977 and the President of Romania later the same year. There were also several high level ministerial visits to Nigeria from communist countries.<sup>33</sup> It is equally significant that the four military leaders (not including the present leader Babangida) did not consider state visits to Britain and the USA as vital for external support and co-operation with their regime. In fact Generals Ironsi, Muhammed and Buhari did not undertake any such visit outside Africa. General Obasanjo after two years in office then accepted a state visit only to the USA. The contrary was the case in the first and second Republics. President Shagari's state visit to Britain was decided in the first six months of his coming into office. However, the largest number of state/official visits between 1970 and 1985 were within Africa. By 1983 Nigeria had had diplomatic relations with all autonomous communist east European countries, with increasing co-operation in the trade and technical fields.

Thus despite the level of economic relations with the West, Nigeria's foreign policy has become substantially non-aligned. Nigeria now maintains a comparatively high level of relations with the two ideological blocs. It does not necessarily favour or sympathise with one rival ideological group more than the other. Perhaps the consciousness of reflecting the quality and character of non-alignment in Nigeria's foreign policy, amidst its capitalist orientation and historical link with the West, led subsequent Nigerian governments to encourage the expansion of relations with

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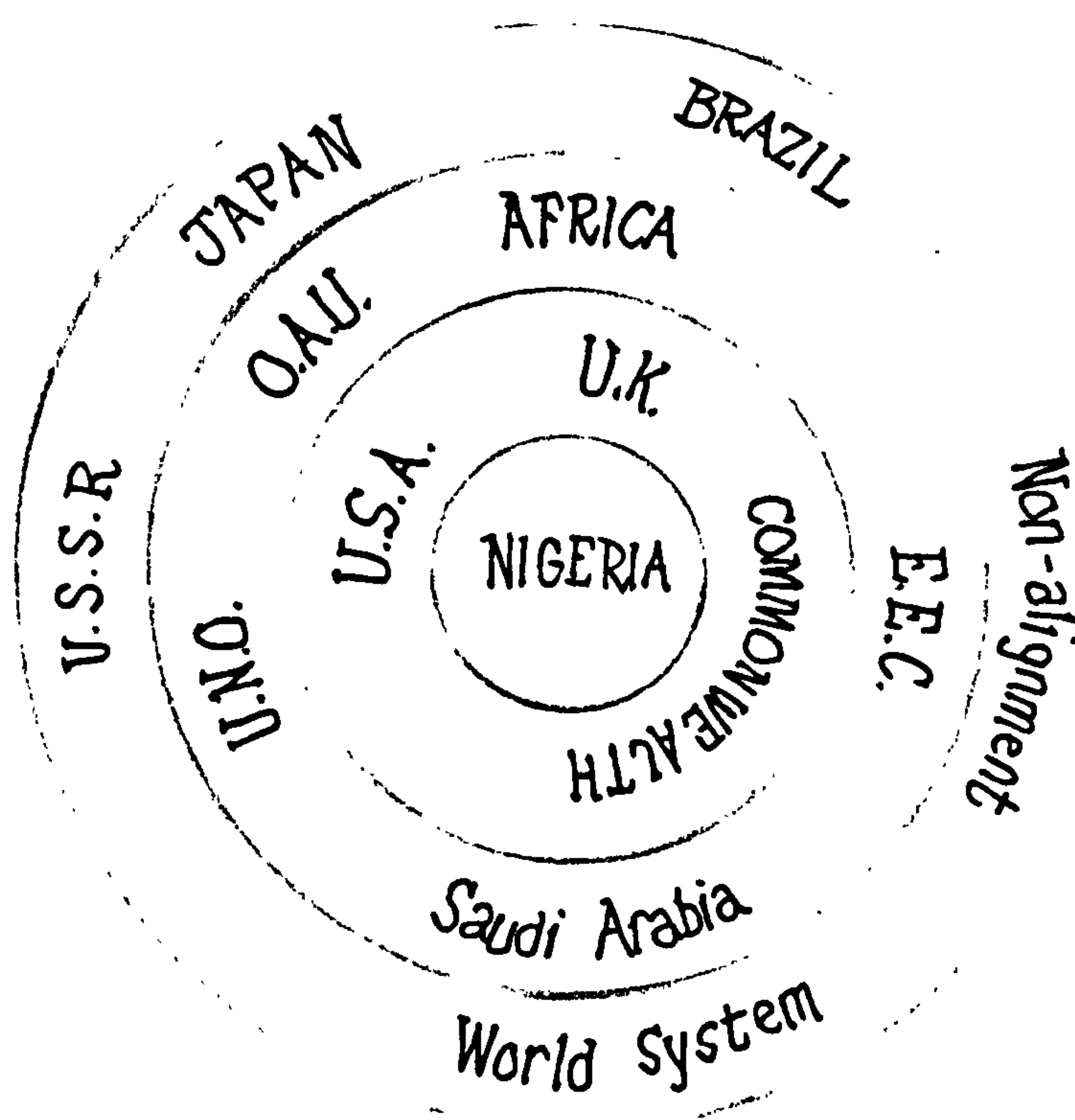
32. Federal Ministry of Information, Press Release No. 792, Lagos, June 1978.

33. Federal Ministry of Information News Release, No. 1234, October 4, 1976. Press Release Nos. 1243 and 1244 of September 2, 1978, Daily Sketch, September 1, 1978.

the USSR and other Communist countries. This is shown, as already stated, in the level of diplomatic relations and political co-operation, the growth rate of economic activities and the scope of technical and scientific co-operation between Nigeria and the Communist countries.

The Ordering of Nigerian relationships and interests

In order to highlight further changes in the pattern and direction of the country's foreign policy practice, we will here design a pattern of its external relationships/interests using a concentric circle device. Within each circle will be grouped clusters of relationships (interests) of approximately equal importance. The main considerations will be the level of diplomatic relations and political co-operation, the value of economic activities, the scope of technical and scientific co-operation and other activities in the relationship between Nigeria and other countries as discussed in both the previous and present chapters. This can be represented as follows:



The diagram above shows that in the innermost circle of Nigeria's relationships were the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the United States of America. At the diplomatic level, Nigeria had three missions in the UK and two in the USA as single countries while as a group, Commonwealth countries came second after Africa. Economically there were more Nigerians in UK and USA than in any other foreign country during the period. The value of investments from the two countries and trade with them were the highest. The cordial relations between Prime Minister Balewa and former British Administrators in Nigeria (see chapter 2) added to the most favoured nation place of Britain in Nigeria's scheme. The same could be said of the USA due to President Kennedy's interest in Nigeria and Africa, as orchestrated during Balewa's visit to the US. It was therefore no accident that UK and USA occupied very high positions vis-a-vis other countries in Nigeria's foreign policy consideration. In the case of the importance attached to the Commonwealth (and UNO), one is inclined to believe that the essential consideration was political: (i) to assert Nigeria's presence in the community of Nations and (ii) to mobilise world opinion against colonial and apartheid regimes in Africa, especially Portugal and South Africa. Also one member of the Commonwealth and UN, Britain, remained the dominant colonial power whose co-operation would facilitate the dismantling of the apartheid system in Southern Africa and the ultimate end of colonisation in Africa. It was believed that the Commonwealth would provide the forum for inducing British co-operation to that end.

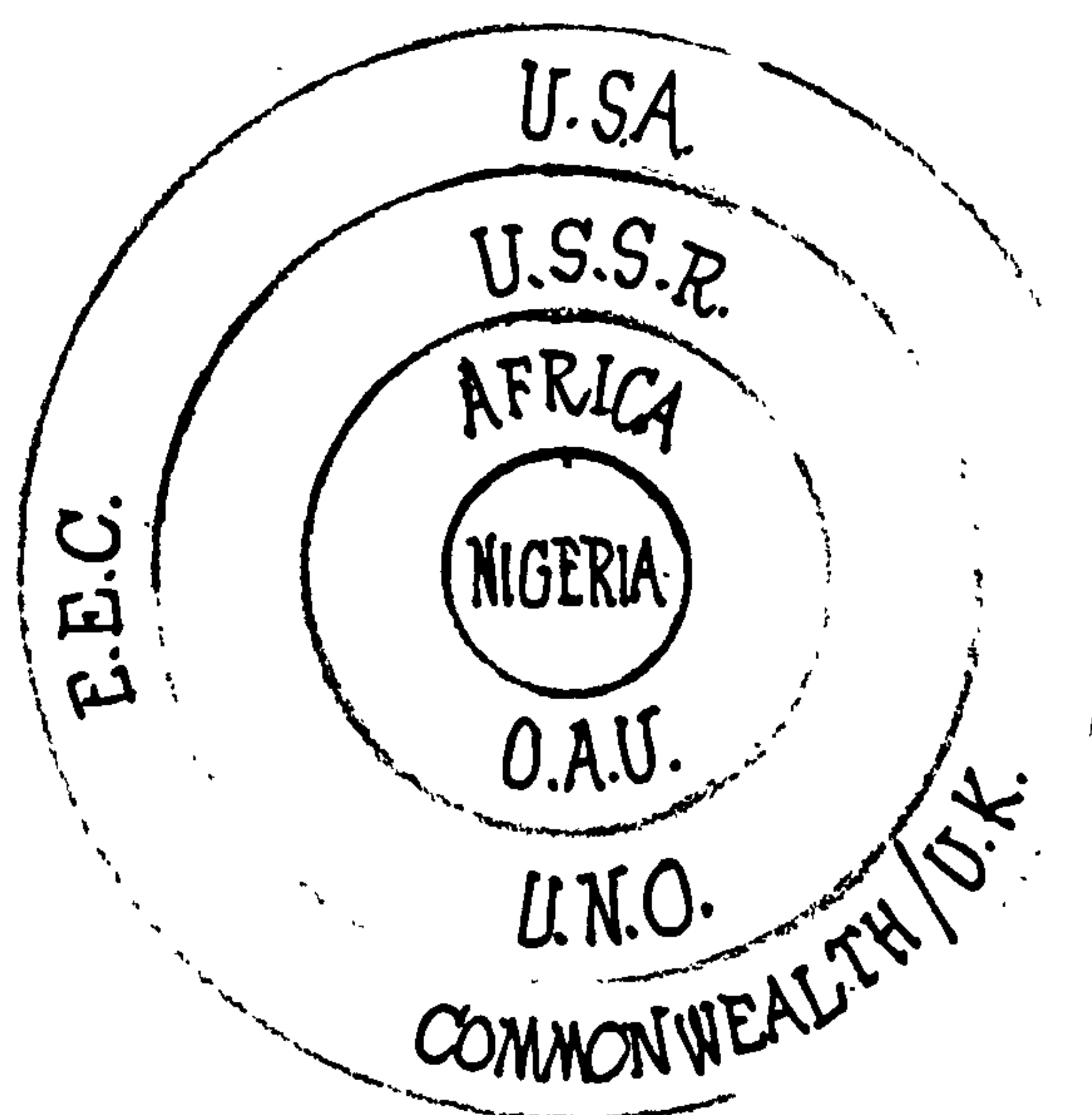
The second ring of the concentric circles includes countries of Africa, the OAU, UNO, EEC and Saudi Arabia with the other muslim states.



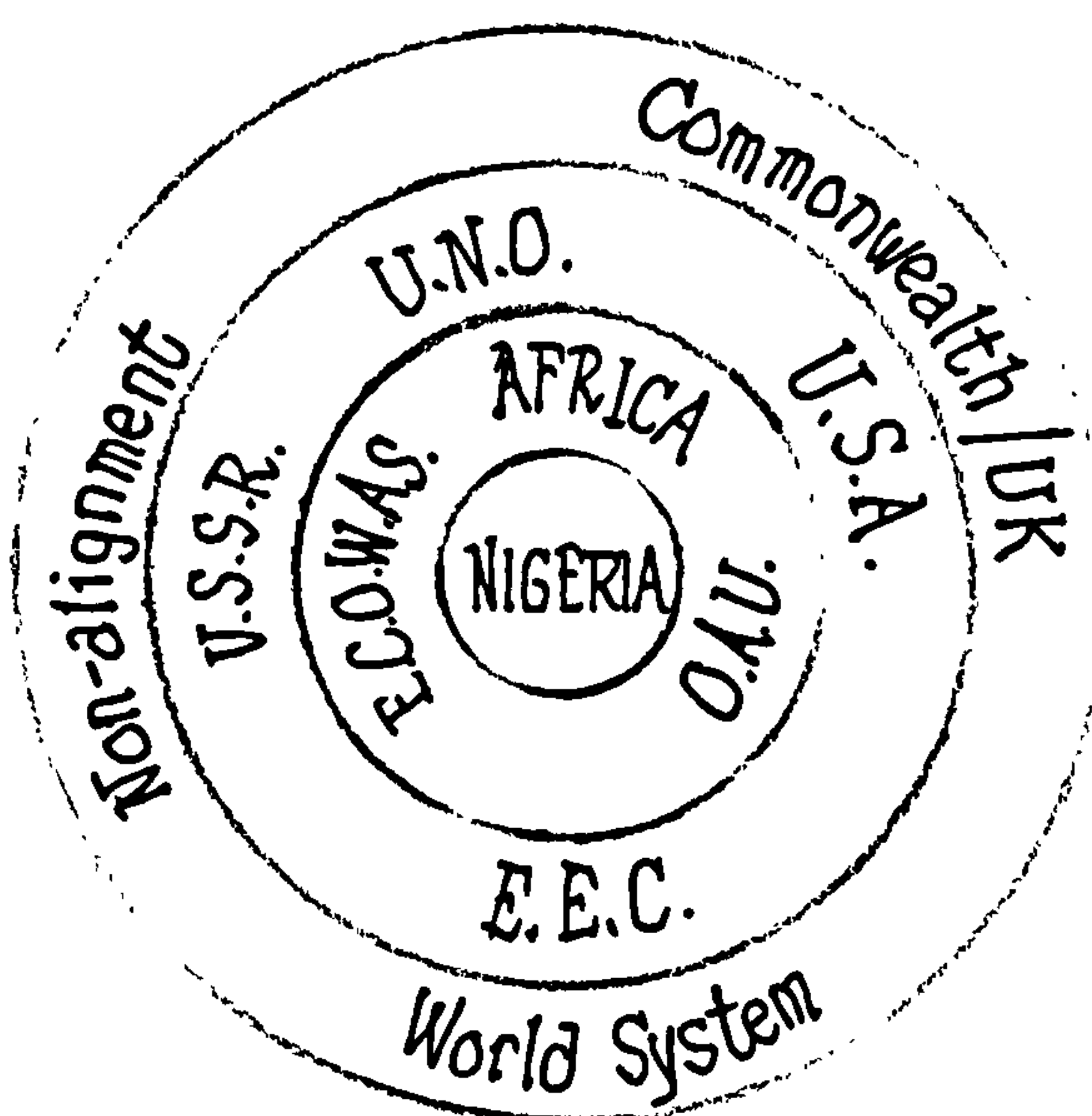
In the third ring of the circle were USSR, non-alignment and the other countries in the world system. The diagram reflects the fact that both ideologically and in terms of direction, foreign policy under Balewa was essentially pro-West.

Between 1966 and 1975, the ordering of the country's foreign relationships and interests can be represented thus:

1966-70



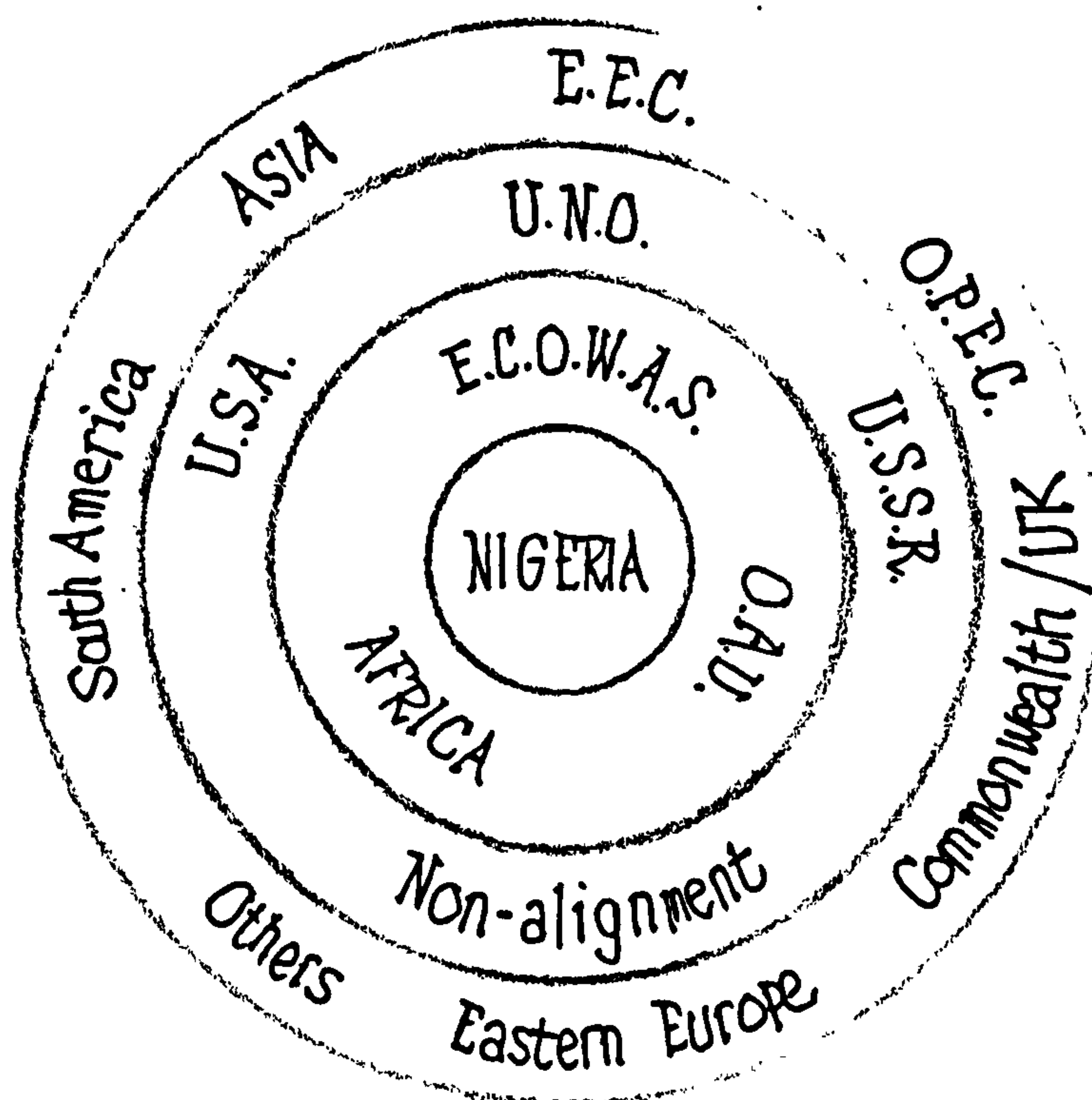
1970-75



The ordering of Nigeria's foreign relationships and interests 1966-75

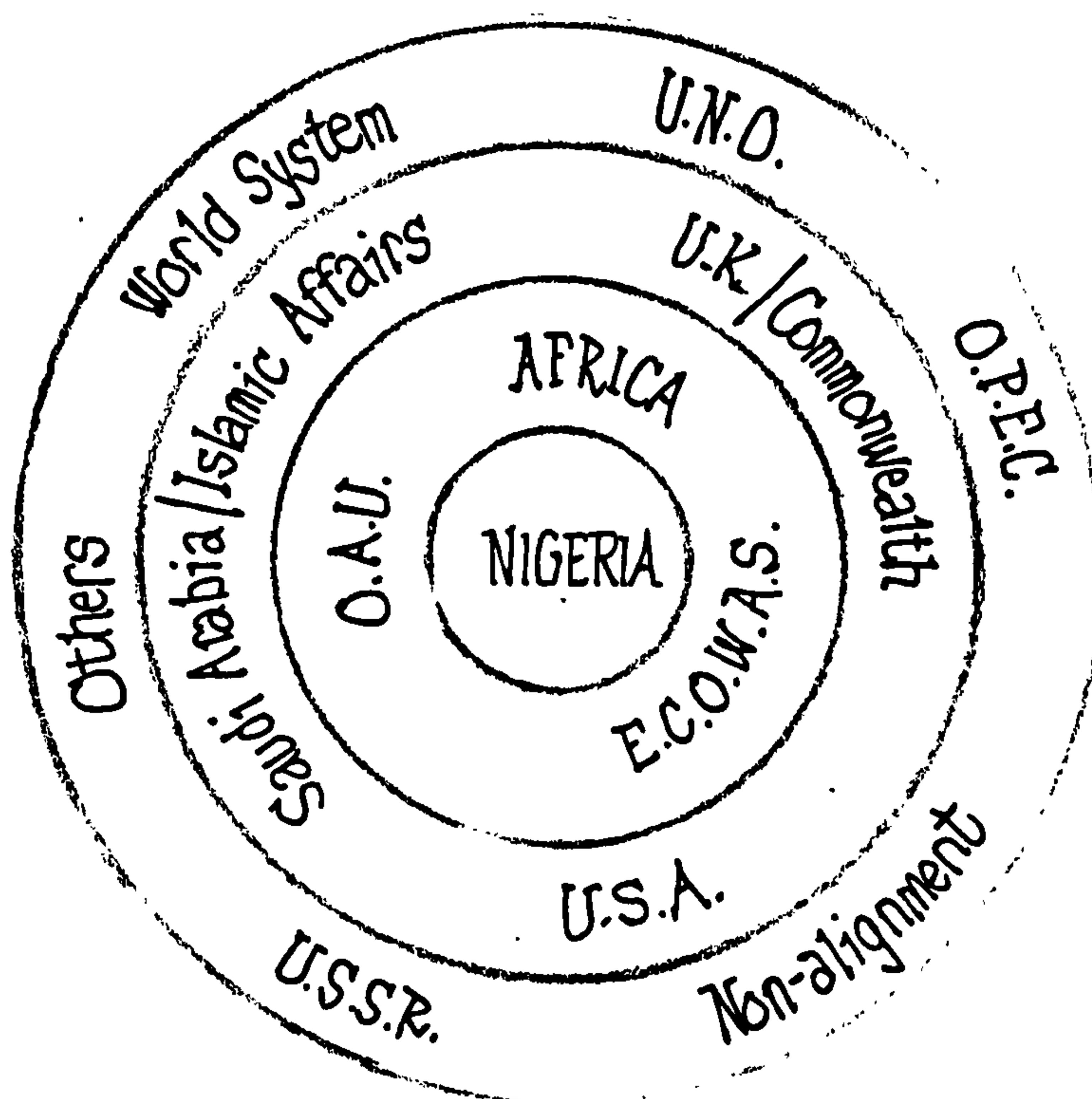
The above diagram indicates that there was a change in the direction of external relations with Africa coming into the innermost ring of the concentric circle. The USSR and the United Nations were next to Africa in importance to Nigeria. Countries that were in the innermost circle of friends during the first Republic declined in their importance and were placed at the periphery. Between 1970 and 1975, however, there was a marked improvement in relations with USA and EEC due to increased bilateral co-operation especially in commercial and technical fields. The change in the direction of foreign policy is in favour of relations with the Eastern European Communist countries, with an obvious boost to Nigeria's policy of non-alignment.

This trend continued between 1976 and 1979 thus:



The ordering of Nigeria's foreign relationships and interests  
(1976-1979)

With the return of Nigeria to civilian rule under a predominantly conservative government, its relationship with UK, the Commonwealth and Islamic states improved thus:



#### The ordering of Nigeria's foreign relationships and interests 1980-1983

This trend continued up to the end of 1985. However Nigeria's relations with the United Kingdom were strained in 1984 as a result of (i) the attempted abduction from Britain of Nigeria's fugitive Mr. Umaru Dikko and (ii) the refusal by the British government to return the fugitive to Nigeria to face charges of corruption and economic sabotage. The effect of the incident was only noticeable in the lowering of the level of diplomatic representation in Lagos and London. The other areas of relations were not affected and so the general position of UK in Nigeria's order of external relations was relatively unchanged.



In summary, the foreign policy practice of Nigeria is constrained by many internal and external factors - mainly economic, political and organisational as discussed in chapter nine, resulting in apparent weakness or inaction on certain issues. By far the biggest constraint is the inability of Nigerians to provide a stable political order internally as a necessary foundation for effective practice of foreign policy. The failure of the electoral process, the series of military coups and coup attempts combine to undermine both the image of the country abroad and the efforts of its foreign policy practitioners.

However, Nigerian foreign policy practice does not necessarily change with changes in regime, hence it has maintained a remarkable record so far. The success of Nigeria's foreign policy practice lies in the fact that it has risen within a relatively short period (twenty five years) to a prominent position in the community of nations. Nigeria has made an outstanding impact on the global system and has gradually and steadily become a force to be reckoned with in African and world politics. Its success exemplifies changes arising from an increasing perception of the need for Nigeria to realize its objectives in its practice and an increasing capacity to do so. Changes in the pattern of relations are reflected both in the changing perceptions of policy makers and in the broad areas of policy itself, notably non-alignment and Nigeria's continental role, diplomatic representation and economic diplomacy which are covered in this chapter.

### CONCLUSION

It is clear from this analysis of the foreign policy process of Nigeria that the political system is characterised by instability and crisis that are capable of undermining the policy process. This state of affairs is reflected in the constant failure of the electoral system, the civil war and over half a dozen military coups/attempted coups etc., all within its twenty-five year history. It has been argued that the causes of crisis and instability in Nigeria include the structural imbalance in the federation, regionalism and ethnic minority problems. The central issue however is the struggle for the spoils of office or "share of the national cake" and this struggle increases in intensity as the national revenue fluctuates disproportionately with aggregate demands of the population. However the political crises appear to have been confined to domestic issues and the changes they bring about have tended also to be in the domestic sphere. The governments that emerge from these changes have also mainly been concerned with political and policy issues in the domestic arena. They turn to foreign policy less from a preconceived notion of desirable changes in external relations, than to make an image for their regime. To do so they rely greatly on the bureaucracy. As a result the process of making foreign policy in Nigeria does not necessarily change with changes in regime, although the activities of each regime contribute to some extent, as we have seen in chapter two, to the formation of Nigerian foreign policy.

The foreign policy process of Nigeria has some discernible patterns and principles that have been identified in this study.

The principles include national protection, economic growth, cultural identity, national aspiration, African freedom, security and cooperation, non-alignment, and promotion of international peace and cooperation. These have been defined, explained and illustrated in chapter four. An attempt has been made to distinguish principles as the general guidelines which govern decisions and actions in external affairs, while "decisions and actions" aim at objectives and goals. An objective refers to the set of values and expectations which generate policy and lead to its ends. It (objective) is part of a goal while a goal is the summation of objectives, which consummate policy. Differences in political outlook will lead to different explanations of the terms. The explanation here is that principles guide policy and objectives generate it while goals consummate policy. By distinguishing the guiding principles of Nigerian foreign policy, it is hoped we have shown that there exists a rational and realistic basis for the country's external behaviour, which (basis) according to Professor Aluko has never been spelt out together before.<sup>1</sup>

As this study shows, Nigerian foreign policy making has an environment which for analytical purposes is divided into domestic and external environments. The pattern of foreign policy making in the country reflects a close link between the environment and the structures that make policy. This link is in the form of

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1. Aluko, Olajide, Essays on Nigerian foreign policy. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1981, pp. 264-265.



an input-output relationship in which demands and supports from both the internal and external environments are channelled to decision making structures of the government for use in making policy. As this study reveals, Nigeria has a very active environment for policy making. Indeed the environment is much more active than many writers had imagined (see chapter five). This is reflected in the many sources and variety of inputs generated from the environment on any given issue. The main sources of input include traditional institutions, the press, National Assembly, political parties, trade unions, other pressure groups and economic institutions (domestic environment); international organisations, state actors and multinational corporations (external environment). These are generally very active in generating inputs into policy making. It is observed that Nigeria's growth in stature and increasing involvement in external affairs result in almost proportional increase in input (demands, support, expectations) from the environment.

However, of all the influences on foreign policy making, altruism is the most dominant from which the country's foreign policy derives its distinguishing characteristics (see chapter five). Altruism tends to shape the policy makers' world view, hence the tendency to insist on such abstract factors as justice, moral conscience and world peace. In particular, it influences the making of foreign policy choices: to be genuinely helpful or exploitative; to maintain long term friendly cooperation or "permanent interest" and expediency, etc. Altruism influences also the selection of strategic instruments in foreign policy:

to employ vile and hostile propaganda or to appeal to reason; war or diplomatic negotiation, etc. It encourages peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation and appeal to moral conscience, while discouraging the use of force or agents such as the CIA, KGB or M16 for clandestine activities in foreign countries. Unlike the capitalist and communist states, Nigeria's foreign policy is not necessarily based on pure calculation of advantages or how to exploit the weakness of friendly countries. It is rather a long term policy of mutual cooperation and assistance. For example in the case studies in chapter eight, the Nigerian policy makers apparently ignored the possibility of securing for Nigeria some economic, political or strategic advantages. There was the opportunity to secure certain products and markets in Africa in exchange for Nigerian oil at concessionary prices, but the Federal Government did not do that. There was the opportunity to establish a Nigerian military presence in Angola (which could have been a clear warning to then Ian Smith's Rhodesia and South Africa) but the Federal Government refused to do so. Similarly, with the Chad Republic, Nigeria had the opportunity to influence the type of government to rule that country but it was considered improper and a betrayal of trust to impose Nigeria's Will on Chadians. So the decisions were made in the interest of African unity and fraternity.

Nigeria's practice of foreign aid without strings also reveals the extent to which altruism influences policy-making in the country. Indeed altruism, usually overlooked by many

writers, is a major cultural determinant of Nigerian foreign policy decisions and actions.<sup>2</sup> The view here is that a proper understanding of the influence of altruism on Nigerian policy-makers is necessary for one to understand both how foreign policy choices are made and the country's behaviour. As a result of the preponderant influence of environmental demands, values and expectations on policy decisions, the conclusion is that the environment is an important component of the policy making process. In effect, whether under civilian or military government, making foreign policy in Nigeria is not done in a vacuum or in isolation of public demands and expectations. This is illustrated further by the Federal Military Government's recent (December 1985) decision in accordance with significant public opinion in Nigeria, to reject an IMF loan and its conditionalities.<sup>3</sup> The variety of sources (societal and governmental) and types of input that emerge on any major external issue and are involved directly or indirectly in decision making, reflect a measure of pluralism in policy making in Nigeria.

However, this study makes a distinction between those who influence policy and those who make the precise policy decisions. It argues that while many organs of government and agencies of society are sometimes involved in making foreign policy, some of them do so not as their primary responsibility. The organs of

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2. For a general explanation of the impact of "societal determinants" and belief systems on foreign policy, see Jensen Lloyd; Explaining Foreign Policy, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982, pp. 45-69 and 101-105.

3. West Africa, No. 3565 of 23/30 December 1985, pp. 2677-2678.



government that have statutory responsibility to do so include the Presidency (Head of State/Government and the assistants), the Supreme Military Council (currently renamed Armed Forces Ruling Council), the National Council of States, the Federal Executive Council (now National Council of Ministers), and the bureaucracy especially the Ministry of External Affairs. These are essentially the executive organs of government and constitute the foreign policy making machinery (see chapter 7). They have the primary responsibility and determine what views and influences will be tolerated in policy making and moreover bear the blame for lapses in Nigerian foreign policy even when such are caused by the action of the other organs of the state. They do not however get the credit for any good performance in external affairs. It is however clear that in Nigeria, foreign policy is made by the executive arm of the government consisting of the Presidency - Federal Executive Council - Ministry of External Affairs column.

The Ministry of External Affairs in particular is the organ that has remained constant and indispensable in the foreign policy process. It is both a major link between the past and present governments, and a reservoir of information and records of activities of the government that are an essential guide to decision making.

With the politicians (civilian or military) depending largely on the bureaucrats for professional advice on technical/public issues in which they (politicians) possess limited knowledge and experience, the Ministry's role in making foreign policy is continuous and ever increasing. In virtually all cases the Ministry has the primary responsibility for defining issues, highlighting consequences and proposing policy alternatives. The Ministry of External Affairs

like the British FCO, may not be easily circumvented in foreign policy making and implementation. Its views may not always prevail but will always be sought on issues of Nigeria's external relations. Given the interdependence between the Ministry and the Federal Executive Council on one hand and between the Council and the Presidency on the other, the making of foreign policy in Nigeria is therefore a group activity. This is the case in both civilian and military regimes.

The case studies in chapter eight clearly illustrate this point and show that the processes of foreign policy making are similar to those usually ascribed to the developed countries.<sup>4</sup> However the period of military rule has often been represented as an era of dictatorship, hence the impression, for example, that Muhammed alone took the decision to recognise the MPLA of Angola,<sup>5</sup> and also the view of some writers that foreign policy making in Nigeria is highly personalised.<sup>6</sup> This study argues that such views are mistaken. A process of foreign policy making in Nigeria involving a series of consultations and the participation of a number of organs of government in initiation, consideration and decision, has become popular among Nigerians

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4. In spite of the prolonged military rule in Nigeria, there is still a high degree of collective responsibility in policy making.

5. Soti Anmbi, A.O., Nigeria's Recognition of the MPLA Government of Angola: A case study in Decision-making and Implementation; Monograph Series No. 9. The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1981, pp. 22-23.

6. Clapham, Christopher (ed.), Foreign policy making in developing states: a comparative approach. Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977, p. 87.

as a means of involving many influential groups including ethnic groups in making national policy and therefore cannot be easily ignored by any leader. The diversity of the Nigerian federation and the attendant difficulty of ruling the country imply that dictatorship cannot thrive in Nigeria.

Thus the decision to sell Nigerian oil at concessionary prices to African countries started from the lower level in the hierarchy and moved upwards through other levels to the top of the hierarchy. The decision was initiated in the Ministry of External Affairs, where it passed through a number of levels up to the Minister. At each level additional information was collected and analysed. Then from the Ministry, a memorandum was passed to the Federal Executive Council for consideration. In doing so the Council called for the view of the Ministry responsible for petroleum. Yet to make the decision, the Council needed further information and analysis. It then set up an inter-ministerial committee to review available information and submit an independent proposal on the desirability or otherwise of selling Nigeria's oil at concessionary prices for African countries. The Committee's proposal like other proposals from the relevant Ministries, was sympathetic to the requests of African countries. The FEC adopted the proposal and the Head of State gave approval to it, then it became government decision, and was passed downwards for implementation.

In the decision to recognise the MPLA government in Angola, the decision process started from the top of the hierarchy (SMC) downwards to the Ministry of External Affairs



which provided basic information and proposed policy alternatives. The proposals then were sent upwards to the Supreme Military Council (SMC), which (like the FEC in the oil sales decision) appointed two special fact-finding missions to Angola for more information and analysis. The proposals were considered by the SMC which made the final decision, approved by the Head of State and sent down the hierarchy for implementation. A similar process was followed in the decision to send Nigerian soldiers to Chad for peacekeeping operations. All the case studies show that foreign policy making in Nigeria is a collective responsibility in the sense of participation of many organs of government in the policy process. They also show that policy making in Nigeria reflects not only the views or interests of the ruling group but also of the others in its environment. It is also clear from this study that foreign policy making in Nigeria has some discernible patterns and processes that are popular with both civilian and military regimes.

From this study, one can identify a few differences between the foreign policy process of Nigeria and those of the more advanced countries. These arise from (1) the impact of idiosyncratic factors such as psychological predispositions and individual belief systems in the making of foreign policy, and (2) the impact of ideology.<sup>7</sup> For example, while capitalist

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7. Ideology is a belief system likened to a prism through which decision makers view reality. It determines for its adherents the scope of foreign policy options and provides the means for rationalizing policy choices. See Jensen, Lloyd, Explaining Foreign Policy; Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982, pp. 72-74.

considerations influence foreign policy options and choices of Western countries and communist considerations influence those of east European countries, foreign policy making in Nigeria is influenced by altruist considerations (see chapters 5, 8 and 10). Thus altruism is a major factor that distinguishes Nigerian foreign policy from those of the advanced countries. The differences, as already noted, manifest in the output not in the process of policy making. There are also differences in the nature of difficulties in policy making. This depends on a variety of factors including the amount of human and material resources available to policy makers of a country on a given issue.

Some of the major difficulties in making Nigerian foreign policy, similar to those that affect its practice, have been analysed in chapter 9 of this work. These include inadequate funding, lack of incentives, poor communication system etc. To many Nigerians, however, the major difficulty lies with the nature and type of national leadership. According to Chinua Achebe "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership".<sup>8</sup> It has been said that Nigeria needs a more enlightened national leadership with fore-sight, who can provide desirable initiatives and directions vital in making foreign policy. There are in particular problems with political input, namely (a) lack of clear, unbiased decisions by leadership (Minister, Head of State); (b) apparent attachment to objectives which are too vague to be reached and/or impossible for Nigeria

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8. Achebe, Chinua, The Trouble with Nigeria; Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 1984.

to realize (e.g. objectives (iii), (iv) and (v) in chapter four); and (c) lack of strong political will and, to a certain degree, incompetence. These are compounded by similar difficulties arising from the composition of the principal organs of government responsible for policy making. As already stated in chapter nine, the application of "federal character and federal balance" at every level of government has resulted sometimes in putting square pegs in round holes. The implication is that policy making is dominated by less skilled individuals. Instances abound<sup>9</sup> of filing clerks and typists without the benefit of a formal education rising remarkably fast to very high positions of policy making (mainly to represent a certain state or group at a given level) in the hierarchy of government. Such persons are sometimes unable to cope with the complex considerations involved in high policy making and at other times, they use the authority of their positions negatively by making policy ineffective. As a result dissatisfaction and discontent spread, leading to general laxity, hence the delays in getting things done in government offices in Nigeria.

Another difficulty that besets foreign policy making in Nigeria is the constant rivalry between the ministries on overlapping matters of external policy, viz. External Affairs and Information over external publicity; External Affairs and Internal Affairs over passports, visas and border policy regarding ECOWAS citizens; External Affairs and Economic Development (now National Planning) over policies towards ECOWAS, OPEC and other international economic organisations and institutions; External Affairs and Education over responsibility for Nigerian students abroad, etc. The rivalries hinder broad based policy planning and development.

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9. See West Africa, No. 3558, 4 November, 1985, pp. 2297-2299.



Closely related to internal rivalry is the problem of inadequate co-ordination. The activities of many policy making organs of government are not well co-ordinated due essentially to leadership problems already discussed and communication difficulties. The importance of good communication network need not be stressed.

There are many areas in which this study of the foreign policy process of Nigeria can contribute to the understanding of international relations in general and foreign policy analysis in particular. Being, as we have seen, a country with about a hundred million people (the sixth most populous country in the world), rich mineral resources and a growing economy, a large military force of about 270,000, a key country in the continent of Africa and an important actor in the international system, Nigeria's position and role in the world are bound to attract the attention of both scholars and actors alike. It is hoped that such an analysis of the principles, structures and processes of its foreign policy will facilitate an understanding of its external behaviour.

Most African states do not approach Nigeria's size, population or resources. None of them probably has produced the educated and skilled manpower that exists in Nigeria today. Militarily with the exception of Egypt perhaps, Nigeria possesses the largest force in Africa. Thus Nigeria has the capacity to influence the positions of many African states in world affairs and as a result is a major factor in the African international sub-system. A knowledge of the dynamics of its policy making is therefore important both in understanding the foreign policies of African

states and in comparative studies.

In terms of global power, Nigeria is however a small power but its leaders feel that they have achieved a real bargaining power in the international community which can be used to project the image of Nigeria and Africa. Nigeria's image of herself and its effect on her attitude towards the big powers, have combined (with other states) to introduce a new element in the global power equation. Hitherto international politics was seen as the creature of the major powers and the small powers were thought to have no role in it, and would never exert any influence in their relationships with the major powers. But as a result of the increasing bargaining capacity of the small powers in their overall relationships with the major powers, the relationships have been seen to change and the small powers have come to play important parts in international politics and the global balance of power. While there is no doubt that the small powers suffer certain basic disadvantages in their relationships with the big powers, some, like Nigeria, possess significant leverage in their dealings with major powers, which imposes limitations on the big powers in their overall relationships with the new states. It is hoped that this study will foster an understanding of the basis of the power of small states and the elements involved in the big power - small power relationships.

This research has been conducted with the perspective of an insider and it reflects a level of development of the structures and processes of foreign policy making in Nigeria. It also reflects, perhaps, an in-depth knowledge of the interaction between the structures and institutions of the society and policy

making organs of the government. It further reflects the growing optimism among Nigerian policy makers of their ability and determination to meet the challenges of this century.

The exposition here attempts to reject a number of superficial and orthodox studies on Nigerian foreign policy. Superficial because they are based less on facts than on one's political stance and orthodox in succumbing to a preconceived notion of underdevelopment and dependence. A point of departure therefore is the insistence that Nigeria deserves to be presented in a better light as a state actor in its own right. Like other sovereign states, its decisions and actions on external affairs at any time are the results of the policy makers' perception of both the given issue and the prevailing circumstances in the domestic and external environments of Nigeria.

This study disagrees with the view that Nigeria is heavily dependent on the West and therefore cannot exercise a truly effective and independent foreign policy. It rather argues that dependency in international relations is reciprocal. The West depends as much on Nigeria as the latter depends on the former. It may be the fact that Western economy, almost at its optimum capacity and tending towards diminishing returns, needs the Nigerian market more than Nigeria needs Western products. Therefore Nigeria cannot be easily blackmailed, particularly as it pays for its imports. Unless it can be proved that the needs of the less numerous urban inhabitants and "the new auxiliary capitalist class" are the dominant factors in the formulation and execution of Nigerian foreign policy (which is obviously not the case), the dependency theory is therefore



misleading. This study will have served a major purpose if it advances an independent and objective analysis of the foreign policy of African states in general and Nigeria in particular.

Finally the emphasis here is on the institutional rather than on the personal characteristics of policy makers and on process rather than on content of foreign policy. The process analysed here can compare with similar studies on USA and USSR or India and Brazil. In other words, contrary to the impression that exists about political process in developing countries, the foreign policy process of Nigeria is not very different from that of the developed countries of Europe and America. If there is a significant difference, it lies in the amount of information and resources put into policy making, which reflects in the content of policy while the process is basically the same.<sup>10</sup> As this study has shown, foreign policy making in Nigeria has been a collective responsibility and actual policy does not necessarily depend on the character of a particular regime. This agrees with the general foreign policy trend that the essence and nature of it does not warrant frequent changes with changes in regime.

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10. See for example Vital, David, The Making of British Foreign Policy, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1968; Bloomfield P. Lincoln, The Foreign Policy Process: A Modern Primer, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982; Schwartz, Morton, The Foreign Policy of the USSR: Domestic Factors, Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., Encino, California, 1975; Keatinge, Patrick, The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy, Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1973; and Jensen, Lloyd, Explaining Foreign Policy, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982.

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